Paul's Companions

DAVID JAMES BURRELL, D. D.

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By

David James Burrell, D.D., LL.D.

Author of "Paul's Campaigns," "The Apostles' Creed," "We Would See Jesus," "The Old-Time Religion," "At the Gate Beautiful," "The Cloister Book," "The Resurrection and the Life Beyond," etc.

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PREFACE

I HAVE been reading "Pilgrim's Progress" again, and wondering if the Bedford tinker borrowed his *dramatis personæ* from the Book of Acts. In any case they look alike, as we shall see. Of course Paul leads the way:

"Then I saw that Christian kept on before, who had no more talk but with himself, and that sometimes sighingly and sometimes comfortably; also that he would be often reading in the roll which one of the Shining Ones gave him."

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I

BARNABAS: "A GOOD MAN"

THEN said Evangelist, pointing with his finger over a very wide field, "Do you see yonder wicket-gate?" The man said, "No." Then said the other, "Do you see yonder shining light?" He said, "I think I do." Then said Evangelist, "Keep that light in your eye."

I

BARNABAS: "A GOOD MAN"

THE name means "son of consolation," by which we are given to understand that this man had a warm heart and an open hand. Here are some of the things we know about him.

I. HE WAS A COMMUNIST

The first reference to him is in Acts 4: 32–37:

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man

according as he had need. And Joses. who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation), a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet."

The incident referred to occurred A. D. 30, just after the arrest of Peter and John for the healing of the cripple at the Gate Beautiful. The two disciples were tried before the Sanhedrin, where a Scotch verdict was rendered, "Innocent; but don't repeat it." On being let go "they went to their own company," where a praise meeting was held: and after that the "community" was organized. It was a foregleam of Utopia as it will be realized in the Golden Age.

One of the important members of this community was Barnabas; who, it appears, (1) was a native of Cyprus, (2) whose former name was Joses, (3) a man of wealth, possessed of "property," (4) of influence also as a Levite, (5) and a conspicuous leader in this movement toward a community of goods.

It would be a serious mistake, however, to confuse this with what is known as Com-

munism in our time. There are some vital points of difference. (1) To begin with, it was entirely voluntary. There was no denial of the rights of property, no confiscation, no attempt to subvert the social order by insisting that "what's yours is mine and what's mine's my own," but a cheerful surrender of the possessions of each for the benefit of all. (2) Moreover, the distribution of the common fund was not general, but "unto every man according as he had need." In other words it was a benevolent fund. The church members in Jerusalem were a feeble folk like the conies, and many of them needed help. (3) Still further, it was a purely religious affair. The motive of the disciples was "to do good and to *communicate,*" "especially unto them who are of the household of faith." They were actuated by the Christian principle of stewardship. They believed that their possessions, whether much or little, were held in trust until called for. The time is coming when all the Lord's talents will thus be placed at his command: then poverty with its attendant miseries will be a nightmare of the past

and the earth will be full of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

So then the framing of this community in the early Church was not a temporary venture into cloudland, but a prophecy of the Millennium. It was like a sun-spot on the mountains, painted by the light shining through a rift of overhanging clouds, as a forecast of the splendor of a cloudless day. It was the setting in motion of great principles which, murmuring like a subterranean river, are destined to reappear and assert themselves in the ultimate Commonwealth of God.

One of the foremost of these Christian communists was Barnabas. He practised "the mind that was in Christ Jesus," who "came not to be ministered unto but to minister" and "emptied himself" for us. He did not offer a tithe but ten tithes of all that he possessed, in recognition of the fact that he held nothing as his own but everything in trust until called for. It is only when a Christian thus realizes his stewardship that he reaches his full recompense in the saying that is written, "All things are yours;

whether . . . the world or life or death or things present or things to come: all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

II. A Gentle-man

The next mention of Barnabas is ten years afterward in connection with Paul's first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion. The interval between his conversion (A.D. 37) and this visit (A.D. 40) had been passed by Paul in Arabia (Gal. 1:17,18) where, among the solitudes, he pursued his theological course in preparation for his appointed work. Then he went up to Jerusalem ready for business; but a cold welcome awaited him. The Christians there could not forget how, as Chief Inquisitor of the Sanhedrin, he had "breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." The record is on this wise:

"And when Saul was come to Jerusalem he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the

Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem." Acts 9: 26-28.

A rare friend was Barnabas, a true "son of consolation." How many there are who look with suspicion on sinners converted from the error of their ways. Paul was truly like a man who has served his term in Sing Sing; but blessed be Barnabas, he was ready to give him the glad hand and another chance. He had two things to say for the reformed man; one was that "he had seen the Lord in the way," and the other was that immediately after his conversion he had gone into Damascus and "preached boldly in the name of Jesus" at peril of his life. This was enough; Paul was received into the fellowship of the disciples and thereafter was with them, "coming in and going out," preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ.

It is related that when John Huss of Bohemia was on his way to prison, wearing a yellow cap covered with devils and hooted at by the jostling crowd, he felt a friendly hand finding its way to his. Not a word was

spoken; but the night before his execution the martyr wrote, "God bless John of Chlum for that right hand of his!" Such kindness is like a cup of cold water to thirsty lips; and "it shall in no wise lose its reward."

III. An Evangelist

The next reference to Barnabas is three years later (A. D. 43). A revival was going on at Antioch. It originated with certain of those who, being "scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen" (A.D. 37), came to Antioch and brought the Gospel with them: "and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord." The work assumed such dimensions that a leader was required. Who should it be?

"Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem, and they sent forth Barnabas that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord." Acts 11: 22-24.

And still the blessed work went on. Another helper was needed. Barnabas cast about for the right man. John and Peter and James and the other apostles were not available, being engaged in important fields. It occurred to him that Paul might be the very one; but where was he?

"Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus for to seek Saul, and when he had found him he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Acts 11: 25, 26.

So began the sweet fellowship of these two yokefellows which (with a single interruption to be noted hereafter) continued for a period of nearly twenty years. Next to the friendship of Christ himself there is none like that of a Christian yokefellow. This is the order of service: the Seventy were sent out two by two. For so it is written: "Two are better than one, . . . for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up." A pair of Christian friends, sympathizing with each

other in their great purpose, are like mountain-climbers roped together and urging their way toward the top.

"I want a warm and constant friend
To soothe my adverse hour,
Who ne'er to flatter will descend,
Nor bow the knee to power;
A friend to chide me when I'm wrong,
My inmost soul to see;
And that my friendship be as strong
To him as his to me."

IV. A Missionary

It is now three years later (A.D. 46). In the meantime the work of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch had been briefly interrupted by news that the members of the mother church in Jerusalem were suffering from famine; whereupon a collection was taken among these Gentile Christians for their relief and the two evangelists went up to Jerusalem to deliver it. On returning to Antioch a meeting was held which marked the beginning of the great propaganda for the conversion of the world.

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Acts 13: 1–3.

In this divine call we find the *rationale* of an enterprise which was destined to change the currents and countercurrents of all history and set them flowing, just in the measure of Christian faithfulness, toward the Golden Age.

Observe, *first,* these men were "separated to go." All followers of Christ are required to "go" in like manner, and to keep going as witnesses and evangelists of Christ; but all are not separated for work in "the regions beyond" like these men.

Second, they were not only "separated," and joined together, but equipped for their work. They had faith, courage and the *charismata,* or special gifts of the Spirit for the working of "signs and wonders," to but-

tress their message. Indeed they had everything but money. Of this Barnabas had none, because he had previously given up all his possessions for the relief of needy Christians; and as for Paul, he had undoubtedly been ostracised and stripped of his birthright when he accepted Christ (Phil. 4:16–18). Thus they went forth, according to the Master's injunction, without scrip or money in their purse, but strong in faith and in the power of the Spirit of God.

V. A Pacifist

The first missionary journey was over and the two yokefellows had returned to Antioch with a good report as to the conquests of faith. But there was a disturbance in the church owing to the fact that certain of the Jewish converts were insisting that the Gentiles must not be received into the church without conforming to the rites and ceremonies of the Levitical law. A Council was called to meet at Jerusalem for the settlement of the question: and Paul and Barnabas went up. They both addressed the Coun-

cil in the interests of peace, and an amicable adjustment was reached, in which, without offending the Jews, the rights of the Gentiles were fully vindicated.

"And they wrote letters by them after this manner: The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment: it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 15:23–26.

By this we are advised that Barnabas was not only in hearty accord with Paul as to the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel but that he was irenic in disposition and broad-minded enough to "differ and keep sweet."

VI. A Vacillator

The deliverance of the Council was received with joy by the Gentile converts of

Antioch. But trouble was brewing. In Paul's letter to the Galatians, written long afterward, he refers to it in these words:

"But when Peter was come to Antioch I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed, for before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation." Gal. 2: 11-13.

The fact is that Peter, with all his splendid qualities, was the most unstable of the apostles. So long as nobody objected he was quite happy in the society of the Gentile Christians, but when those members of the mother church came down from Jerusalem he was ready to readjust his sails to the shifting wind. And Barnabas, alas! went with him. This was more than the brave, catholic soul of Paul could stand for. He was no waverer, "driven with the wind and tossed." It is not said, however, that he withstood Barnabas to the face, but only Peter, because of his "dissimulation." Bar-

nabas was simply "led away," being weak; but weakness is a sin. A follower of Christ should be strong enough to brace himself against his principles and let the crowd sweep by.

VII. A Man With a Temper

The time had now come (A.D. 51) to resume the missionary journeys. The wanderlust was upon Paul; and he proposed to Barnabas, "Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they do." But at this point a serious difference arose between them, for

> "Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark: but Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark and sailed unto Cyprus." Acts 15: 37–39.

The "sharpness" of this contention is indicated by the Greek word "paroxysm." When two strong tempers come into col-

lision there is bound to be something of the sort unless the grace of God prevents it.

In this case both men were right. The fact was that on the former journey John Mark had weakened in the face of danger and turned back: but it was also a fact that he had recovered his courage and was prepared to resume the work. Paul and Barnabas, however, were too hot to be reconciled. The time would come long afterward (Col. 4: 10), but not yet, so they parted company. Barnabas took his nephew John Mark and sailed away to Cyprus, his former home, while Paul set out with a new companion in another direction, each going his own way.

VIII. "A Good Man"

It is comforting for us to know that Barnabas was not perfect. Nobody is. "We're all John Thomson's bairns." There never has lived but one in this world of ours of whom it could be said, "He brought the bottom of his life up to the top of his life." He is our Exemplar. We make a grave mistake when we imitate anybody but Christ.

The Bible is our copy book in which the Teacher writes: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." We begin by writing a line as nearly as possible like him. Then instead of looking at the Master's line we are naturally disposed to copy our own and to keep on doing so. The result is that whereas our handwriting should constantly improve in growing more like His, it is likely to go from bad to worse by the repeating of our own faults. Where is the remedy? Get back to the original copy! That is, "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said — "

The secret of a happy and useful life is in keeping our eyes on Him who is the author and finisher of our faith. So shall we finally arrive at "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

II

JOHN MARK: THE YOUTH WHO FLINCHED

Now I saw that the pilgrims came to a place where stood an old monument, hard by the highway-side, at the sight of which they were both concerned because of the strangeness of the form thereof; for it seemed to them as if it had been a woman transformed into the shape of a pillar. Here they stood looking and looking upon it, but could not for a time tell what they should make thereof. At last Hopeful espied, written above the head thereof, a writing in an unusual hand; but he, being no scholar, called to Christian (for he was learned) to see if he could pick out the meaning: so he came, and after a little laying of letters together, he found the same to be this, "*Remember Lot's wife.*"

II

JOHN MARK: THE YOUTH WHO FLINCHED

This young man was the son of the widow Mary of Jerusalem, who, we are given to understand, was a woman of wealth and influence. At her home the disciples were accustomed to meet in "a large upper room" which was set apart for their use.

The first we hear of him is in the year 30, the memorable year of the crucifixion. It was on an April night, when Christ was in the Garden of Gethsemane, that, at the appearance of the Roman guard, the disciples "all forsook him and fled." The timid boy, who was with him, would fain have followed his Master but, on being recognized, he also took to his heels and left his linen garment behind him. He tells the story himself, though for obvious reasons he does not mention his name. Mark 14: 51, 52.

The next time we hear of him is about fourteen years later: A.D. 44. The disciples are again assembled in the upper room. Persecution has broken out; James the beloved pastor of the Jerusalem church has been slain with the sword and Peter is languishing in prison. The little band of believers — a feeble folk like the conies — have come together to unite their prayers for his deliverance. The doors are shut and a maidservant named Rhoda is stationed at the outer wicket. While they are thus engaged there comes a sound of knocking; and their hearts are in their throats. Is another of their number to be haled to judgment? But fear gives way to amazement when the portress comes running to say, "It is Peter that knocks." On being admitted he tells this wonderful story:

"As I lay sleeping in my cell between two soldiers a hand was laid upon me; and opening my eyes I found the place filled with light. A voice said, 'Arise up quickly!' and straightway my chains fell off. 'Gird thyself, bind on thy sandals and follow me!' I obeyed like one in a dream; the great gates

of the prison opened before me, as if their bolts were drawn by unseen hands, and presently I stood under the open sky. Then whither should I go but to this upper room, where I knew you would be praying for me?"

The widow's son was among those who listened to that wonderful story; and without doubt he was deeply impressed by it. Possibly this was the beginning of the singular friendship of the most headstrong of the disciples with this timorous young man. In any case, since Peter speaks of "Marcus my son," it is probable that the latter was converted through him.

The next mention of John Mark is in the following year, A.D. 45, when a great enterprise was on foot. Paul and Barnabas, at Antioch in Syria, were planning a missionary tour. A courier or "minister" was needed; and John Mark volunteered to accompany them. The flush of enthusiasm was upon him. He was at the age when one builds castles in the air. He dreamed dreams and saw visions of splendid success. And thus they sailed for the island of Cy-

prus, followed by the benediction of the little band of believers, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. On landing at Salamis they began their work, finding a ready audience in the synagogue of the Jews. Thence passing through the island westward, preaching from village to village, they came to Paphos, where they delivered their message under the shadow of the famous temple of Aphrodite. There were many conversions; and all went well until they were opposed by Elymas the sorcerer; whom Paul, being filled with the Holy Ghost, rebuked and lo, a sudden blindness fell upon him. All this was calculated to impress the young man. For nothing succeeds like success. No doubt he said within himself, "I am glad I came on this mission; it is a wonderful work and the Lord is manifestly with us!"

It was now decided to carry the gospel over into Asia Minor. A short sail brought them to the coasts of Pamphylia. It was an inhospitable country, occupied by semi-barbarians. The missionaries proposed to push into the interior and preach the gospel

"to them that were afar off." John Mark looked on the high mountains, in whose fastnesses were unknown possibilities of danger, and felt his heart sinking within him. A ship was in the harbor, bound for home. He bade farewell to Paul and Barnabas, paid his passage and returned to Jerusalem.

Was this because he was homesick? If so, it was "a fault that leaned to virtue's side." A leaf out of my memory makes me slow to blame him. I left home at sixteen for Phillips Academy at Andover and looked on no kinsman's face for two dreary years. Night after night I saw visions of the old home with the garden of old-fashioned flowers and the well ("Oh, for a drink of water from the well beside the gate of Bethlehem!") and one face, the dearest face in all the world, bending over me. I wouldn't give a brass ha'penny for a man who is ashamed of being led by his mother's apron-strings. The Duke of Exeter, in the red fury of battle, came upon Suffolk, his wounded kinsman; whereupon he says, "All my mother came into mine eyes and gave me up to tears"; and the king replies, "I blame you not; for

hearing this I must perforce compound with mistful eyes, or they will issue too." There's no one like the Elect Lady; and there's no place like home.

> "A charm from the skies seems to hallow us there,
> Which, go through the world, you'll not meet with elsewhere."

But however we may sympathize with the homesick youth, there is no pull of the heart-strings to be compared with duty. Duty is the greatest word in the vocabulary of life. A man once came to Jesus, saying, "I will follow thee, but let me first go and bid them farewell which are at my home": to whom Jesus replied, "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." Is this a hard saying? It is a frank statement of the ethical imperative. The same truth is affirmed with still greater emphasis in the Master's words, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."

It may not have been homesickness, however, but a disbelief in foreign missions, that moved John Mark to retire from the field.

As a Jew he probably entertained the common prejudice against the evangelization of the Gentiles. Thus far on their journey Paul and Barnabas had been seeking "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," but now they were facing the regions beyond. The highlands of Pamphylia were peopled by "dogs of Gentiles"; and the young evangelist had no thought of sharing the benefits of the Gospel with these outcasts.

And again who are we that we should blame him? Is there not a prejudice in many quarters to-day against the world-wide view of evangelization? Oh, for an enlargement of heart, that we might grasp the universal purpose of Christ! In following him shall we pause at the coasts of Pamphylia? Then must we needs part company with him; for he ever goes to "the regions beyond." Had he believed, as some of his people do, that charity not only "begins" but stays at home, he would never have come on his far mission to this world of ours, nor would he have put his Church under commission to go "into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,"

that is, to go and keep going, even "to the uttermost parts of the earth," until the Good News shall have been proclaimed to the last man.

The probability, however, is that it was sheer cowardice that made John Mark a quitter. The timidity of his boyhood had not left him. The highlands of Pamphylia were occupied by a dangerous people. This was the country that Paul referred to in his account of "perils of waters and perils of robbers." It was the region of adventure; the wonderland of those times. There were rumors of banditti dwelling in the defiles of yonder cliffs.

I never knew a boy who would not whistle when he went through a dark wood to keep his courage up. We are afraid of things that are and of things that are not and of things that never will be. We are afraid of tomorrow, particularly if it happens to be Friday. We cover up our fear with such proverbial excuses as "Discretion is the better part of valor," and "A living dog is better than a dead lion," and "He who fights and runs away will live to

fight another day"; but there is no disguising it.

But fear cannot excuse cowardice. The heart must be steeled to meet difficulty and to confront the dangers of the Christian life. When Peter says, "Add to your faith virtue," the word is *virtus;* that is, the courage of a true soldier. In like manner Paul says, "Quit you like men!"

The story of John Mark thus far is a sad one; but happily there is a sequel. It was eight years after his defection at Perga that Paul and Barnabas were arranging for a second evangelistic tour; and Barnabas, who was the uncle of John Mark, proposed to take him along: but Paul objected, saying, "It is not well to take him who departed from us at Pamphylia." The contention thereupon was so sharp that the two missionaries "parted asunder." Paul, taking Silas as his companion, went one way; and Barnabas with his nephew went another. Of the outcome of this latter tour we have no record; but let us hope the young man flinched from none of the dangers and hardships which confronted him.

This was probably the case; for seven years later we hear of him as a companion of Peter in Babylon (1 Peter 5:13). It is pleasant to see the fearless old apostle and "Marcus his son" associated in this way. It means that John Mark had found himself at last; for Babylon was full of the threatenings of fierce heathen and fanatical Jews.

Four years later (A.D. 64), we hear of him again: and now, significantly, he is with Paul in the Prætorian camp at Rome. Paul is a prisoner; and Nero is on the throne! The man who could link his fortunes with Paul under such circumstances has surely gotten the better of his fears.

The last mention of John Mark is two years after (A.D. 66). By this time he is a middle-aged man. He is now an associate of Timothy in the city of Ephesus. Paul is still a prisoner at Rome, but has been transferred from the Prætorian camp to the Mammertine jail. Old and worn, friendless and lonely, shivering in his dungeon, he writes to Timothy, "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. *Take Mark and bring him with thee; for he is profitable unto me*

for the ministry." Elsewhere he speaks of him as "my fellow-laborer in the kingdom of Christ."

Here the record ends; but tradition says that John Mark became a foreign missionary, going with Peter to distant Rome and thence to Alexandria, where he suffered martyrdom by being dragged asunder with ropes. If he might return and reason with some of us who stand hesitating on the borders of Pamphylia, he would surely say, "Fall into line, O Christians, with the vast purpose of Christ! He died for all, even unto the uttermost; and ye are all fishers of men."

Now what is the lesson? *There's hope for a coward,* hope for a deserter, hope for a backslider, if he will only return to Christ. Many a man can look back through the years to a day when he entered into a covenant of faithfulness which was broken at the borders of Pamphylia. If that means you, my friend, why not profit by the past? One of the secrets of success is to take advantage of our blunders. "We rise on stepping stones of our dead selves to nobler things."

Pluck up courage! The Lord is always giving us another chance: and cowards like us are the stuff that heroes are made of.

A man on his way to the firing line was chided by a comrade, "Your knees are shaking: you're scared." His answer was, "Indeed I am! If you were half as scared as I am you'd run." But he didn't run. He pressed on in spite of fears and won the victory. In the memory of past misadventures let us face the dangers before us. All is not lost! The best is still possible so long as God stands by us. The fight is on; and we are called to the thin red line. This means that we must disencumber ourselves of all that hinders and face our responsibilities. It is no easy matter to live well.

There are always lions in the way to the Celestial City. Christian in the "Pilgrim's Progress" was frightened when he caught sight of them and heard their roaring. Bunyan says, "The lions were chained, but he saw not the chains." There's the trouble with us. "Fear not the lions," the porter called, "for they are chained and are placed there for trial of faith. . . . Keep in the

midst of the path, and no hurt shall come unto thee."

In one of the battles of the Wilderness a young man was wounded unto death. His father was telegraphed for; and finding him in the hospital lying on his face with a gaping wound between his shoulders, he said quietly, "My son, that's a bad place to be hit." The youth turned with a painful effort and, pointing to a wound in his breast, said, "Father, here's where the ball went in." Blessed are those who bear "the marks of the Lord Jesus" in their breasts; who fight to win, and die, if need be, facing the foe.

Let us therefore put on the whole armor of God; and above all forget not "the sandals of preparation," the spiked sandals of a soldier who looks for a grapple at close quarters, that we may be "able to withstand in the evil day and, having done all, to stand!" The great promise is to him that is faithful unto death. "To him that overcometh will I give . . . a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it."

III

SILAS: A SINGER

Now as they were going along and talking, they espied a boy feeding his father's sheep. The boy was of a fresh and well-favored countenance; and as he sat by himself he sung.

"Hark," said Mr. Great-Heart, "to what the shepherd's boy saith."

So they hearkened and he said,

"He that is down needs fear no fall;
He that is low, no pride:
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide."

Then said the guide, "Do you hear him? I will dare to say this boy lives a merrier life, and wears more of that herb called heart's-ease in his bosom, than he that is clad in silk and velvet."

III

SILAS: A SINGER

In the year 50 a Council was called to meet in Jerusalem for a final settlement of the question whether Gentile converts must submit to the requirement of the Ceremonial Law on becoming members of the church. It was maintained by the Gentile converts that salvation was conditioned solely on personal faith in Christ, while high churchmen of Jewish birth and training insisted that compliance with the Levitical law was necessary to salvation. So warm had been the controversy that a serious breach was threatened; the crux of difference being as to the fundamental doctrine of Justification by Faith. The first address in the Council was made by Peter, who reminded his hearers of what had happened twenty years before, on the Day of Pentecost, when the

Gospel door had been opened to all alike in the words, "The promise is unto you and to your children and to all that are afar off." He was followed by Paul and Barnabas, who, having just returned from their first missionary journey, related what wonders of conversion had been wrought by the Holy Spirit "without respect of persons." Then James, the pastor of the mother church in Jerusalem, arose, and, though naturally predisposed to the Jewish side of the question, suggested such mutual concessions as would, without the sacrifice of any principle, satisfy both parties and enable them to work together in peace. A resolution was drawn up accordingly, which is recorded *ipsissima verba* in Acts 15 : 23–29.

The first that we hear of Silas, or Silvanus, is in connection with this Council, where he is mentioned as one of "the chief men." The Decree of the Council was regarded as of sufficient importance to warrant its immediate transmission to all the churches, an undertaking of no slight difficulty in view of the long distances and awkward means of communication in those days.

For this purpose a committee was appointed, consisting of Paul, Barnabas, Jude and Silas. The appointment of Silas on a committee charged with duties so delicate and far-reaching would indicate that he was a tactful man of irenic disposition. In the course of the long and arduous journeys involved it is quite certain that Paul would become well enough acquainted with Silas to pass final judgment upon his character and efficiency as a fellow-servant of Christ.

The work of the committee ended at Antioch, which was then about to supplant Jerusalem as the center of operations of the Christian Church. In that city the four commissioners tarried for about two years, preaching the Gospel with notable results. But Paul was restless; he was not cut out for a settled pastorate or for long continuance anywhere. The *wanderlust* returned to him and he resolved to set out upon another missionary journey. "Let us go again," he said to Barnabas, "and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they do."

A serious difference arose between the two missionaries then and there. Barnabas wished his nephew John Mark to accompany them; but Paul objected, because John Mark had failed them on their first journey, turning back at the foot of the Pamphylian hills. "The contention was sharp," so sharp indeed that Paul and Barnabas "parted asunder," going their several ways.

But Paul must have a yokefellow: he was the last man in the world to work alone. The needed yokefellow was at hand, one in whom he could place full confidence as "a faithful brother." So it came to pass that Paul yoked up with Silas for his eventful second journey. They set out together from Antioch with their faces toward the northwest, pausing at Derbe, and then on to Lystra, where they were joined by Timothy, who had taken the place of John Mark as courier and general helper. Then on to Iconium and Troas, where Paul had his vision of the man of Macedonia calling, "Come over and help us."

That meant Europe — the invasion of a new continent for Christ. A mighty enter-

prise! The Hellespont was crossed. The missionary group now consisted of Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke. We know that Luke, "the beloved physician," was with the company from now on, because he as the narrator now uses the pronoun "we" instead of "they." On landing they at once pushed up the mountain road to Philippi, all girded for work.

It is a proverb that wherever Paul goes you may look for a revival or a riot. At Philippi they had both. The first convert was Lydia, "a seller of purple" — who proved to be the "man of Macedonia" who had beckoned for help — followed by other trophies of grace, among whom was a slave-girl who had been used for divination. And then the trouble began. Her masters, "seeing that their hope of gain was gone," stirred up a commotion that landed the missionaries in jail after a severe scourging.

It is easy to imagine them in the darkness, sore and weary, with chains upon their wrists. "It's a cold and dreary place," says Paul; "do you think a Psalm would help us?" Now Silas seems to have been a sing-

ing evangelist, and like a Scotch precentor doubtless knew how to "lift the tune." Strange echoes awoke in that dismal jail. "At midnight Paul and Silas sang praises unto God; and the prisoners heard them." Perhaps they sang the 46th selection in the Jewish Psalter:

> "God is our refuge and our strength,
> in straits a present aid;
> Therefore, although the earth remove,
> we will not be afraid;
> Though mountains in the sea be cast;
> though waves a roaring make
> And troubled be: yea, though the hills
> by swelling seas do shake.
> Our God, who is the Lord of hosts,
> is still upon our side;
> The God of Jacob our refuge
> forever will abide."

The hymn was over; the walls were shaking and falling; an earthquake! The prisoners are loosed: and presently the frightened and convicted jailer is kneeling before them with the cry, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" In the sequel you may find a marvellous demonstration of God's in-

terest in the welfare of those who love him.

From Philippi Paul and Silas travelled on to Thessalonica, where for three weeks they taught and preached, and then again came a riot and the missionaries were sent out "by night unto Berea." Here was a haven of rest for a time, the word being eagerly received by the Bereans, but the coming of a deputation of hostile Jews from Thessalonica brought interruption and Paul again hurried away, leaving Silas and Timothy behind. On reaching Athens he sent posthaste for his inspiring co-workers. At Corinth Paul did his best work after Silas and Timothy rejoined him, and though Silas is not again mentioned by name in the Acts we can believe that he was standing by Paul in his trials and rejoicing with him in his victories for many a long day.

Some years later, Peter closes his First General Epistle with the words, "By Silvanus, a faithful brother, I have briefly written, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God." (1 Pet. 5:12.) It thus appears that Silas was with Peter

during his closing years in distant Babylon, sharing persecution with him and ready, as a faithful brother, to serve as his amanuensis and possibly as his postman in conveying his inspired message to the saints that were scattered abroad. So farewell, Silas, faithful brother and true yokefellow in the gospel of the grace of God.

His record is a brief one. It is evident that he did not covet the limelight. Why should he? "The Master praises, what are men?" But his character is clearly outlined in certain lines.

To begin with he is called "a prophet," at that time meaning an efficient and authoritative teacher of the Word. It is safe to say that he found himself at home among the Bible-loving people of Berea who "received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so."

He was also a gleaner. Observe how often, when Paul left one city for another further on, Silas is said to have remained behind "to gather up the loose grain of the harvest." This indicates that he had the

necessary qualifications for binding together the converts and establishing them in the most holy faith.

But above everything else he was the Singing Pilgrim. As Sankey to Moody, as Alexander to Chapman, and as "Rhody" to Billy Sunday, so was Silas to Paul; the joy-giver of the campaign, the singer of songs in the night. Blessed is the man who, in the name of the Lord, can give "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

Perhaps it was with that dark night in the Philippian jail in mind that Paul, in his later years, wrote to the church at Corinth, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also," and again to the church at Ephesus, "Be filled with the spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord," and again to the church at Colosse, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."

It is difficult to think of Paul himself as a singer; but he was wise enough to choose for his yokefellow one who could lend the wings of music to his work. Many a time have I heard Mr. Moody, at the close of a sermon, say "Now, brother Sankey, give us a song!" And the truth he had preached was thus mellowed and deepened and carried aloft in melody. "Two are better than one, . . . for if they fall the one will lift up his fellow."

Two by two we toil in the harvest, two by two we journey through life. Whom shall I choose for my yokefellow? Silas, come hither! I need thee when the shadows of Philippi gather about me; come, solace me with one of the songs of Zion. Let us go, through gloom and gladness, even to heaven's gate with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs!

So did Christian and his comrade in Bunyan's allegory pass through danger after danger, singing as they went, until they were welcomed by angels at the gates of the Celestial City; and this was their song:

"Behold how fitly are the stages set
For their relief that pilgrims are become,
And how they us receive without one let
That make the Other Life our mark and home!
What novelties they have to us they give,
That we, though pilgrims, joyful lives may live:
They do upon us, too, such things bestow
To show we pilgrims are, where'er we go."

IV

TIMOTHY: "THE GENTLE BOY OF LYSTRA"

Now, as Christian went on his way, he came to a little ascent which was cast up on purpose that pilgrims might see before them. Up there, therefore, Christian went; and looking forward, he saw Faithful before him on his journey. Then said Christian aloud, "Ho, ho! so-ho! stay, and I will be your companion."

IV

TIMOTHY: "THE GENTLE BOY OF LYSTRA"

The ancient town of Lystra, now called Katyn-serai, lay in a verdant plain among the mountains of Lycaonia. It was chiefly famed for its worship of the pagan gods.

Two dusty travellers, so ran the legend, came to Lystra one evening and sought in vain for hospitality. The doors of the wealthy were closed against them. At length they applied at the humble home of Philemon and his wife Baucis, who gave them welcome and sheltered them for the night. At daybreak, when the aged couple awoke, their guests had disappeared: and the humble cottage had been transformed into a splendid temple with alabaster floors and golden pinnacles. Then they knew that their mysterious guests were Jupiter and Mercury, his messenger; and thenceforth people came from near and far to see the miracu-

lous temple and pay their devotions to the Olympian gods.

In the year 47 two travel-worn men came to Lystra with the Gospel message. They were Paul and Barnabas, on their first missionary journey. There being no synagogue in the town, they preached in the open streets. Not much attention was given them until Paul healed a man who had been a hopeless cripple from his birth. On seeing this miracle the people concluded that the gods were again come down to them "in the likeness of men." Barnabas, imposing in stature and of benignant presence, was naturally identified with Jupiter the Olympian father; while Paul, "the little Jew," would of course be taken for Mercury. Garlands were brought and the priest of Jupiter appeared with beasts for sacrifice. Paul and his companion, who had been slow to recognize the frightful meaning of the demonstration, now cried out, "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God!" Then came the reaction, as a

matter of course. On finding that these men, so far from being gods, were opposing the worship of their gods, the people presently dragged Paul out beyond the walls and stoned him, leaving him for dead.

And here is where we meet with Timothy for the first time. He was then a youth of possibly sixteen years, the son of a pagan father and a Jewish mother who dwelt in Lystra. The mother Eunice, with "grandmother Lois" and the young man, had been converted by the preaching of Paul; and doubtless they were "the disciples" who assuaged his wounds and cared for him until the next morning, when he was able with the help of Barnabas to resume his journey.

The next we hear of Timothy was four years later, A.D. 51, when Paul again visited Lystra. This was on his second missionary journey. Barnabas had now parted company with him because Paul, for good and sufficient reasons (Acts 15:38, 39), would not take John Mark along as their courier. Silas had taken the place of Barnabas: but a courier was needed. Why not Timothy? "The very man," said Paul; and then and

there began a friendship so loyal, affectionate and enduring as to furnish an exemplary illustration of "the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love." Paul was now forty-five years of age and Timothy scarcely twenty-one. They were like father and son; indeed the younger is addressed again and again in the Epistles as "mine own son" and "my dearly beloved son." But notwithstanding this disparity in age there was no disparity in service. They were true yokefellows and fellow-laborers in the Kingdom of Christ.

Setting out together from Lystra, they stayed by one another to the journey's end. At Troas they took ship together in answer to the Macedonian call, "Come over and help us!" They pushed their way together along the mountain roads to Philippi, on to Thessalonica, thence to Berea, where Silas and Timothy remained while Paul pushed on to Athens. Again united, they came to gay, godless Corinth where a fruitful campaign was carried on. Then homeward bound, with a halt at Ephesus for "a good while" with important results.

This brings us to the year 55, when Timothy appears as the "bishop" or minister of the Ephesian Church. It appears that when Paul resumed his homeward journey he left Timothy behind to take charge of the growing body of believers in that city. As to his faithfulness in that difficult field — under the shadow of the temple of great Diana — we have abundant evidence in the letters which Paul afterward sent him. In the First Epistle to Timothy, written 64 A.D. while Paul was a prisoner in the Prætorian camp at Rome, we have the classical basis of all pastoral "charges" from then until now. In the second we have the Apostle's farewell to his "beloved son."

In the year 66 Paul, having been rearrested after his first imprisonment (2 Tim. 4:16, 17), was confined in the Mammertine jail. It was a cheerless place. Alone and friendless but for the companionship of faithful Luke, he writes to Timothy,

"Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. Take Mark and bring him with thee. The cloke that I left at Troas, when thou comest bring with thee, and the books and parchments. Do thy diligence to come before winter. Grace be with you." 2 Tim. 4: 9-22.

It is safe to say that Timothy was at Rome in due time, with the "cloke" to comfort Paul against the chill of the approaching winter, and the "books and parchments" for the alleviation of the old man's weary hours.

It appears certain that Timothy had patiently continued in the pastorate of the Ephesian Church for the intervening period of eleven years; and, for anything to the contrary, we may assume that he was still in charge (A.D. 95) when John, the last survivor of the apostles, delivered his message "to the angel" (literally, messenger or ambassador) "of the Church at Ephesus." (Rev. 2:1–7.) We cannot follow him further; here the record ends.

There is enough, however, to give us a clear *tout ensemble* of Timothy's character. To begin with, he was a quiet man, with a "gift." What the particular gift was that Paul exhorts him to "stir up" (2 Tim. 1:6) we are left to surmise. It was probably not eloquence; possibly it was tact. The length of his pastorate in Ephesus would indicate that he knew how to manage a difficult situ-

ation and get along with all kinds of people. In any case he used his gift to the glory of God, which is the main point. Everybody has a gift of some sort, which needs not only to be stirred up but kept stirring. Miss Havergal knew how to sing; and when she became a Christian she resolved to sing her best for the Lord who had redeemed her.

"Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only, for my King!"

The courage of Timothy is also in evidence. He did not flinch, like John Mark, at the foot of the Lycaonian hills. He faced the danger that confronted him as a companion with Paul in the Mammertine jail. He had counted the cost of being a Christian and faced whatever might befall him as simply "in the day's work." The Lord wants such men to serve him.

And then consider his faithfulness. It is rumored that some ministers are wont to regard their parishes as mere stepping-stones to larger parishes further on. Not so Timothy. "Tarry in Ephesus," wrote Paul; and tarry he did, resolutely continuing in labor

of love and patience of hope for a lifetime. It was to a "likeminded man" (Phil. 2:19, 20) that Paul wrote his farewell words: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

And this, finally. The groundwork of his character was fidelity to the Word of God. He had learned the Scriptures in his old home at Lystra, where, despite the influence of a pagan father, he imbibed the unfeigned faith of his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois. "From a child," writes Paul, "thou hast known the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture," he significantly adds, "given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." It was because Paul, the "father superior" of this young man, was confident of his devotion to the Scriptures that he could hopefully exhort him to preach accordingly: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth

not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

From all of which we conclude that the best Christian is a Bible Christian, and that the best minister is one who not only believes in the inspiration of the Scriptures but can rightly adjust them to the needs of those who hear him. The Lord's promise is, "My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

V

LUKE: "THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN"

This Mr. Standfast was he whom the rest of the pilgrims found upon his knees in the Enchanted Ground.

V

LUKE: "THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN"

It is no easy matter to do good work when one is handicapped by ill health. Paul was never a well man: he speaks of his "oft infirmities," the chiefest of which was a mysterious "thorn in the flesh" that never ceased to trouble him.

All went well on his first missionary journey until he reached Galatia, where he was laid low by an illness that must have detained him for a considerable time. (Gal. 4: 13, 14.) He then pressed on until he came to Troas, where he had his vision of the man of Macedonia beckoning and calling, "Come over and help us!"

This meant an adventure into Europe. A new continent for Christ! So important an enterprise could not safely be undertaken in Paul's precarious condition without the help of a physician; and here is where we catch our first glimpse of Luke. He may

have been a resident of Troas; if so he must have given up his local practice in order to accompany Paul and minister to him.

How do we know that Luke here joined the missionary group that crossed the Hellespont into Europe? By the change of a pronoun in the narrative. Up to this point the writer of the Acts of the Apostles — none other than Luke himself — has used the pronoun "they," but from henceforth he speaks in the first person, "we." (Acts 16: 10.) By following the change of pronouns from "they" to "we" and back again we shall have no difficulty in tracing the footsteps of Luke from now on.

He continued with Paul as far as Philippi, where — from the resumption of the pronoun "they" — we conclude that he was either constrained to remain behind for a season or possibly to return to his native city. In any case he did not rejoin the missionary group until several years later, when, on the third journey, they came again to Philippi. (Acts 20: 6.) Here the chronicler resumes the first personal pronoun and keeps it to the end. It would appear that

Paul's failing health now called for the constant attendance of a physician; and Luke never failed him.

He was with Paul on his perilous journey to Jerusalem (Acts 20:15, 16), also during his imprisonment at Cæsarea and his voyage to Rome; and he kept the log of the final voyage with its driving storm and shipwreck. (Acts 27:1.) He shared the hardships of Paul's weary confinement in the Prætorian camp and subsequently in the Mammertine jail (2 Tim. 4:11), and was with him no doubt when the executioner summoned him to die outside the gates of the city.

No man ever had less to say of himself than Luke; yet by reading between the lines we may form a very distinct outline of his Christian life and character.

I. Tradition says that he was a painter. Whether that is correct or not, certain it is that he portrayed the Apostle Paul in colors unmistakably bright and clear. This was because he dipped his inspired pen in "Siloa's brook that flows fast by the Oracle of God." Nor can his self-effacement in be-

half of the great missionary conceal his own face and figure as that of a singularly upright and devoted man.

II. He was a writer of distinction, master of a style marked by great clarity and picturesquesness. He begins the Acts of the Apostles with these words: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach until the day in which he was taken up." The Gospel according to Luke is "the former treatise" referred to. These two books remain as his enduring memorials. In "the Gospel according to Luke" we have really the Gospel according to Paul, the probability being, as Athanasius says, that Paul "dictated" the substance of it.

III. He was a skillful as well as "beloved" physician. Of the four evangelists who wrote the Life of Jesus he most emphasizes the miracles of healing and dwells most particularly on the symptoms of disease and the mode of treatment. But while thus betraying his own professional skill he hides himself with the utmost care behind the figure of Jesus as "the great physician." It

is he who tells the touching story of the woman with an incurable hemorrhage, revealing a quiet sense of humor at the expense of his professional brethren in the statement that she "had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any." He attributes to Jesus such healing power that "virtue went out of him" through the very touch of the hem of his garment. No other of the sacred writers gives us so clear a view of the compassion of Jesus toward the poor, the helpless and the abandoned. Where in all the world of literature can be found so vivid a portrayal as in Luke 15 of Jesus as the incarnation of God, coming down from heaven to seek and to save, and seeking the lost" until he find it"?

IV. But in his relation to Paul we know this man best as a faithful friend. No fair-weather friend was he; through evil and good report he stayed by him. This is the sort of friend we need, one who stands ready to summer and winter with us. "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me," writes Paul to Timothy in the darkness and chill

of his last imprisonment; "only Luke is with me." Only Luke! But what to this weary old soldier would the Mammertine jail have been without Luke?

But there was Another with Paul in those weary hours, a better Friend than Luke, a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. "The Lord," he says, "stood with me." And this is the Friend whom Luke in all his writings commends as the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely. Blessed is the man who confides in Him!

One could wish that we knew more of the later years of this "beloved" man. As it is, in parting company with him we cannot but remark upon his likeness to "Mr. Standfast" in "The Pilgrim's Progress," who was also faithful unto the end. As he came to the brink of the river, with the glory of the Celestial City before him, he "talked with the companions that had waited upon him thither. And he said, 'This river has been a terror to many; yea, the thoughts of it also have often frightened me; but now methinks I stand easy. . . . The thoughts of what I am going to, and of the convoy

that waits for me on the other side, do lie as a glowing coal at my heart. My toilsome days are ended. . . . I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of; and wherever I have seen the print of his shoe in the earth, there I have coveted to set my foot too. His name has been to me as a civet-box; yea, sweeter than all perfumes. His voice to me has been most sweet, and his countenance I have more desired than they that have most desired the light of the sun. His words I did use to gather for my food, and for antidotes against my faintings. He hath held me, and hath kept me from mine iniquities; yea, my steps hath he strengthened in his way.' Now, while he was thus in discourse, his countenance changed; his strong man bowed under him; and after he had said, 'Take me, for I come unto thee,' he ceased to be seen of them. *But glorious it was to see how the open region was filled with horses and chariots, with trumpeters and pipers, with singers and players upon stringed instruments, to welcome the pilgrims as they went up and followed one another in at the beautiful gate of the city.*"

VI

LYDIA: THE PURPLE-SELLER

Then the porter rang his bell, as at such times he was wont, and there came to the door one of the damsels, whose name was Humble-mind; and to her the porter said, "Go tell it within that Christiana the wife of Christian and her children are come hither on pilgrimage." She went in therefore and told it. But oh, what noise for gladness was there within when the damsel did but drop that out of her mouth!

VI

LYDIA: THE PURPLE-SELLER

THE story begins with a voyage — a memorable voyage.

On the deck of a vessel crossing the Hellespont are three men searching for another man. One of them had a dream last night at Troas, in which he saw a dim figure, known by his peculiar garb and dialect to be a Macedonian, stretching out his hands and calling, "Come over and help us!" Paul was the last person in the world to be unresponsive to such a call. Summoning his friend Silas and Luke, his attendant physician, he "immediately" set sail.

The two epic heroes of ancient Rome and Greece had also sailed from Troas; but the Æneid and the Odyssey dwindle into insignificance when compared with the adventure of these men. It means a new continent for

Christ! Somewhere in those distant hills of Europe the pursuivant of a mighty cause awaits these men. But will they find him?

The next day was the Sabbath. But Philippi was a pagan city and cared nothing for the Lord or for his holy day. Three strangers sought a synagogue in vain. Outside the gates there was a *proseuche,* or "place where prayer was wont to be made," and a company of devout women, Jewesses and "proselytes" of Jewish faith, were there engaged in worship when — no doubt to their amazement and perhaps embarrassment — the three strangers appeared in their midst. In accordance with the custom of the synagogue they were invited to speak on the lesson of the day: "If ye have any word of exhortation for us, say on." (See Luke 4:16; Acts 13:15, etc.) We have no report of Paul's sermon, but it goes without saying that he preached on "This Jesus is the Christ."

And then and there they found the "man of Macedonia." The forerunner of all Christian converts on the continent of Europe proved to be a woman; as it is written:

"A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized and her household she besought us saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord come into my house and abide there." Acts 16:14, 15.

This is not much of a biography, but we must make the most of it; since — except for a few brief and somewhat vague allusions — this is substantially all we know of her. But there is a good deal here for one who is able to read between the lines.

First, she was a native of Thyatira. Now Thyatira was in Mysia, a pagan country which Paul had greatly desired to enter with the Gospel message, but when he "assayed to go" with his companions "the Spirit suffered them not." (Acts 16: 7, 8.) It would appear, however, that the desired end was accomplished through the conversion of Lydia; the probability being that she was the means of establishing the church which afterward flourished in that city. (Rev. 2: 18–29.)

Second, she was a "devout" woman, that is a "proselyte" or convert from paganism

to the Jewish religion. As a worshiper of the true God she was in the way of discovering God revealed in his only begotten Son. There are many "devout" people who are not Christians but, in so far as they are earnest seekers after truth, they are certain to accept Christ when they behold him.

Third, her heart was open. The Lord had so opened it that on hearing that Jesus was the prophesied and long-looked-for Messiah she "attended" to the message and received him. This is salvation; this is "justification by faith"; this is what it means to be a Christian, no more and no less.

Fourth, she was "baptized"; that is, she made an open confession of her faith. The Church has only two sacraments: one is baptism, which as an initiatory rite commits the initiate to the open and avowed service of Christ; the other is the Lord's Supper, in which the church-member at stated times renews his covenant. When Lydia was baptized with her household she gave it to be understood that she and her children were prepared to stand up and be counted for Christ.

Fifth, she opened her house to Paul and his companions. This meant more than the customary hospitality of the Orient: it was an expression of gratitude for the great service they had rendered her, and also a recognition of the new and wonderful bond of fellowship which every believer finds in the company of Christian friends. "Birds of a feather flock together." "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love!"

There is a sequel. It was not long before the campaign in Philippi came to a sudden end. The healing of the demoniacal malady of a slave girl, whom her masters had used as a pythoness with much profit to themselves, led to a riot and the arrest of Paul and Silas as disturbers of the peace. They were scourged and cast into prison. That night there was an earthquake which shook the prison walls and released the prisoners. Their jailer, whose life under the Roman law was forfeit in case of their escape, threw himself upon their mercy, crying, "Men and brethren, what shall I do?" Never was a better chance to preach the Gospel, and Paul immediately took advantage of it, saying,

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house." And behold the man believed and "was baptized and all his straightway."

A strange conversion and how different from Lydia's! Her heart was gently "opened" by the Spirit, while it took an earthquake to convert him. But so it is written: "There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." (1 Cor. 12:6.) Not all are born into the Kingdom in the same way. Some Christians can remember the very day and hour when, after long conviction, they were gloriously blinded for a season, like Saul of Tarsus, by a light above the brightness of the sun; others remember their conversion as the quiet falling of the dew or the breaking of a new day; while others still cannot at all remember the beginning of their Christian life. God works as he will. The New Jerusalem has twelve gates and every gate is of pearl; let no one insist that another shall pass through the same gate by which he entered into the Celestial City.

The story of Lydia ends with a scene in

the church at Philippi. Eleven years have passed. The minister, possibly Epaphroditus, is reading to the congregation a letter just received from Paul, a prisoner at Rome. In view of the relations of Lydia with Paul and with the Philippian church it is strange that the letter makes no mention of her. Perhaps she was dead, or had removed to some other city. Or possibly we may discover her in the modest company referred to in these words: "I entreat thee, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the Gospel, whose names are in the book of life." (Phil. 4:3.) In any case Lydia is worthy to be named among those who "labored together" with Paul. She journeyed with him in spirit and shared with him the hardships of his ministry. "Let her works praise her in the gates."

It is sometimes said by way of criticising the Church that "the women keep it up." In large measure this is true. It is also true that the women are the main support of our domestic life. If it were not for the gracious influence of our mothers and wives and daughters what sort of homes would our

homes be? And the women stand back of our schools and hospitals and all institutions that make for the betterment of the community. Moreover of late their leaven has so beneficently leavened the lump of national affairs that I doubt if the crustiest bachelor in America would suggest a return to the good old times when not infrequently our ballots were cast in dramshops to an accompaniment of ribald profanity. It is just occasion for regret that so many Christian women, like Lois, are yoked up with pagan Greeks who, cumbered with much service in the marketplace, can find neither time nor inclination to serve God. To utter a gibe at the Church because Lois is there with her boy Timothy is to show a singular ignorance of analogy and the eternal fitness of things.

All hail to the Lydias of the Church, the ministering women whose hearts are open to truth and in whose lips is the law of kindness! By the memory of the mother of our Lord and of the mothers that bore us, of the sisters that guided our early feet and the wives who fill and furnish our homes with labor of love, we take shame to ourselves

that ever a man presumes to cast a slur on woman's devotion to Christ.

All hail to our elect ladies! If ever we get to heaven we shall find them there before us — and not alone. It is written of Christian that, fleeing from the City of Destruction, he left his household behind him; but Christiana would not go without her children. At heaven's gate we shall meet them, mothers like Hannah and Christiana, mothers like yours and mine; and as they enter with the sunlight of blessing in their faces, we shall hear them saying, "Here, Lord, am I and they whom thou hast given me!"

VII

AQUILA AND PRISCILLA

I will sing you first this song:

"When saints do sleepy grow, let them come hither
And hear how these two pilgrims talk together;
Yea, let them learn of them in any wise,
Thus to keep ope their drowsy, slumb'ring eyes."

VII

AQUILA AND PRISCILLA

In 54 A.D., this man and his wife were pursuing their trade as tentmakers at Corinth, whither they had come in pursuance of a recent edict of the Emperor against the Jews. (Acts 18:1–3.) It chanced that at that time Paul was carrying on an evangelistic campaign in the same city, and, being a tent-maker by trade and needing work, he found his way to Aquila's shop. As he plied the needle he related to his fellow-workmen the wonderful story of his conversion and explained the Good News. They welcomed it gladly and were known thenceforth as followers of Christ.

Of all Paul's helpers none were to prove themselves more helpful than these two. A lonely man, he was in constant need of the comfort which such a home-making couple could provide for him.

A few years later Paul went to Ephesus

and they with him. He soon departed for Jerusalem however to attend one of the annual feasts, and his work was left in their hands. Meanwhile a learned Jew of Alexandria, named Apollos, had come to the city and, being eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures, was teaching "diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John." In other words, he perceived that the times were out of joint and anticipated the coming of the kingdom; but the larger truths of the Gospel were as yet unknown to him. In some manner he came under the influence of Aquila and Priscilla, and "they expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." (Acts 18: 24–26.) This appears to have been the first Theological Seminary of the Christian Church: primitive, indeed, yet it may be doubted whether in all the world there was another institution of learning where the truth was more sincerely or comprehensively taught. Not Zeno's Painted Porch, nor Plato's Academy, nor Gamaliel's school at Jerusalem could have so well equipped Apollos for his work as an evangelist.

In Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 16:19) mention is made of Aquila and Priscilla and "the church that is in their house." This probably means no more than that, at stated times, the followers of Christ met and worshiped together at their family altar: nevertheless the domestic circle is thus invested with a peculiar sanctity as the germ of that great organism which we call the Church of God.

Later they were at Rome as Paul's helpers. It would appear that they had been involved in some sort of persecution, from which they had rescued Paul at the peril of their lives. (Rom. 16:3–5.) And again mention is made of "the church that is in their house." A strange contrast this to St. Peter's in the Rome of to-day! That humble church in the tentmakers' home had no tiaraed Pope, no imposing College of Cardinals, no elaborate paraphernalia of worship; yet great was God's blessing upon it.

The last mention of Aquila and Priscilla finds them back at Ephesus in the year 66. (2 Tim. 4:19.) There is a tradition that on the 8th of July — the day set apart for them

in the martyrology of the Romish Church — the faithful couple were led out beyond the walls and beheaded. It is easy to fill in the details of the pathetic picture; each looked at the other with eyes full of love, as if to say, "Farewell; fear not!" There was a flash of the blade, and they were at home with God.

The story of Aquila and Priscilla is a beautiful idyl of home-life. The religion of Christ is singular in the emphasis which it puts upon the privileges and responsibilities of the domestic sphere. It is written that when Sayka-Muni had discovered "the Great Truth," and had determined to devote himself to its propagation, he came to his home in the night-time and, finding his wife asleep, with her infant beside her, he softly kissed her, said farewell and went his way. This was *Mahabanish kramana,* "the Great Renunciation." He saw his home thenceforth no more, but, sitting under the sacred Bo-tree, gave himself to meditation, losing himself in contemplation of the Ineffable One. How striking the contrast between this and the life of Jesus! At the home in

Nazareth he was "subject unto his parents"; at the home in Bethany he found rest and comfort during the troubled years of his ministry; at the home in Cana he laid his benediction upon the delights of social life; and when he would portray the glories of heaven, he spoke not of a city, nor of a better country, nor of a garden of delights, but of home, sweet home. "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

Here is a pleasant picture also of wedded love. Aquila and Priscilla are always named together, as if they were inseparable; but, singularly, the order varies, suggesting that there was no strife for the pre-eminence. It reminds us of what Jeremy Taylor said: "When God created woman, he made her not of Adam's head, as if she were to rule over him; nor out of his feet, as if he were to rule over her; but from his side, close by his heart, because he should ever love and honor and protect her."

In these days of loose thinking and looser living in these premises, it is well to empha-

size the fact that *wedlock is a divine ordinance.* It is not a sacrament; wherever so regarded, as among all the Latin nations, immorality prevails. But this union was ordained of God in the time of man's innocency. "It is not good," he said, "for man to be alone"; wherefore he made woman to be his helpmeet. The generic man, the social unit, is not one but two in one; as it is written, "Male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called *their* name Adam." (Gen. 5:2.)

This union is, further, pronounced to be *"honorable in all."* A Scotch girl to whom her minister had said, "Janet, it is a very serious thing to be married," answered without hesitation, "Aye, minister, I ken it is a serious thing to be married, but it is more serious no' to be." The humor of the canny lass was quite eclipsed by her philosophy. There is such a thing as "single blessedness"; but it stands as the exception and not the rule. Blessedness is a path for two. It has been truly said of wedlock, "It halves our sorrows and doubles our joys."

But there are two conditions affixed to an

ideal marriage. One is mutual love. There is no place in the divine economy for a "marriage of convenience." It is a perversion of the order of nature and a travesty on the ordinance of God. You may carpet your floors with softest velvet, cover your walls with richest tapestries, fill the atmosphere with music of harp and dulcimer, and spread your table with all rare and delicate viands; but if love be wanting your home will be no better than a lodge in a garden of cucumbers. On the other hand, the nearest approach to heaven is "love in a cottage." The hail may rattle on the roof, the snows sift under the eaves, the grate be cold and the larder empty; the wolf may howl at the door, the King of Terrors himself may stand beckoning at the threshold, but if love abides within, all's well.

A man in public life, well-known and distinguished among our law-makers, whose domestic establishment is a proverb for hospitality and whose wife is a recognized leader in society, recently said, "Our hearts go back longingly to the days when we lived in a home of two rooms, practising petty

economies to make both ends meet; when we were apart from the world and alone with each other; those were our happiest days."

> Love is better than beauty or wit;
> Love is better than gold;
> Love is not found in the marketplace;
> Love is not bought and sold.

The other condition of ideal happiness is to be joined in the Lord. It has been wisely said, "Be not unequally yoked together." (2 Cor. 6:14.) This is an old-fashioned precept; but its wisdom is certified by the sorrow of many lives. It is obvious that when husband and wife are at odds concerning the fundamental facts of religion they are not "united as one." A Christian thinks more of his religion than of anything else; it is his meat and drink; it is the very air he breathes. The name of his Saviour is as ointment poured forth; he lives for Christ, and is willing to die for him. How, under such circumstances, can one be happily joined to another who is averse to such considerations or quite indifferent to them? The advice of Paul to couples who are thus

matched but not mated is found in 1 Corinthians 7:12–17: but an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. A duet of musical instruments is impossible except as they are keyed to the same pitch. There are many who, failing to remember this, have married in haste to repent at leisure.

The family altar is the heart of the Christian home. It is as true now as in the days of Obed-edom that God prospers the home where the ark abides. In the morning, when each member of the household sets forth upon a day of unknown duties and dangers, is it not well to kneel together and offer prayer like that of the Breton mariner, "O Lord, keep me; my boat is so little and the ocean so wide"? At eventide is it not well to invoke the protecting care of God? In the hour of sorrow, when sickness invades the home or when there is a crape on the door, there are strength and comfort and hope in clasping hands at the doorway of the Holiest of All. It is a grave responsibility which a father takes who allows his children to grow up to maturity and pass out into the responsibilities of life without having heard

his voice lifted in their behalf at the throne of the heavenly grace.

We glory in our American homes; but before the foundations of this Republic were laid the Christian home had its place among the Scottish hills. "The church in the house" was kept up at peril of life and confiscation of goods by those who were pledged to Christ's crown and covenant! Very many of our lyrics of domestic life are of Scottish birth. One of them is "The Cotter's Saturday Night." The steps of the weary worker are quickened as he catches sight of the light in the window:

His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnilie,
His clean hearthstane, his thriftie wifie's smile.
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labor and his toil.

* * * *

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride;
His bonnet reverently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare:
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,

He wales a portion with judicious care;
And "Let us worship God!" he says with solemn air.

* * * *

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad.

And another is "John Anderson, My Jo." The faithful wife, on whose cheeks the rose has faded, in whose eyes the light is dim, looks up into the face of her gray-haired companion and sings with quavering voice:

"John Anderson my jo, John,
When we were first acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonnie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson my jo!

"John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And mony a canty day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither.
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go;
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson my jo."

And another of these home-songs tells of the Reconciliation. The husband has quarreled with his gude-wife and speaks entreatingly:

"Thou hast sworn by thy God, my Jeanie,
By that pretty white hand o' thine,
And by a' the lowing stars o' heaven
That thou wad aye be mine.

"And I hae sworn by my God, my Jeanie,
And by that kind heart o' thine,
By a' the stars sown thick o'er heaven,
That thou shalt aye be mine.

"Then foul fa' the hands that wad loose sic bands
And the heart that wad part sic love;
But there is nae hand can lose my band
But the finger o' Him above.

"Come here to me, thou lass o' my love,
Come here and kneel wi' me:
The morn is fu' o' the presence o' God,
And I canna pray without thee.

"The Book maun be ta'en when the carle comes hame
Wi' the holy psalmodie;
And thou maun speak o' me to thy God,
And I will speak o' thee."

But Aquila and Priscilla, husband and wife, *were also partners in faithful service.*

It would appear that they shared the duties of their workshop. It is much to say that they were not ashamed of manual toil, since in those days it was regarded as the business of slaves. The life of Jesus as the Carpenter of Nazareth has done much to reverse that judgment, although there are still some who deem it more honorable to live by the sweat of their fathers' faces than of their own. But these tentmakers of Pontus were not ashamed of their craft. It is safe to say moreover that the product of their labor was known for its excellent quality. Their tents were made of honest goat's-hair, sewn with honest seams and disposed of at an honest price. The trade-mark "A. & P." would mean much among the dwellers in tents of those days.

But Aquila and Priscilla did not confine their attention to handicraft; they were in the higher service of the kingdom of Christ. Though not in holy orders, they were faithful in the preaching of the Gospel and showed its excellency in their walk and conversation. The supreme need of our time is not more preachers but more consecrated

laymen; more men and women ready to exemplify their religion in the common duties of life.

It was a goodly sight when the Crusader rode forth from his walled castle, clad in chain armor, his plume waving, banner flying, lance poised, in quest of valorous deeds. The world looked on while he strove in the tourney or championed the weak and helpless or fought for the conquest of the Holy Sepulchre. But it is a grander sight before God when a man, with no blazonry of pomp or circumstance, addresses himself day by day to labor of love and patience of hope. Such an one was Charles Kingsley of gracious memory, of whom his wife wrote: "The outside world must judge him as an author, a preacher, a member of society, but those only who lived with him in the intimacy of every-day life at home can tell what he was as a man. Over the real romance of his life and over the tenderest, loveliest passages in his private letters a veil must be thrown, but it will not be lifting it too far to say that if in the highest, closest of earthly relationships a love that never failed

— pure, patient, passionate — for six-and-thirty years, a love which never stooped from its own lofty level to a hasty word, an impatient gesture or a selfish act, in sickness or in health, in sunshine or in storm, by day or by night, could prove that the age of chivalry has not passed away forever, then Charles Kingsley fulfilled the ideal of a 'most true and perfect knight' to the one woman blest with that love in time and to eternity. To eternity, for such love is eternal, and he is not dead. He himself, the man, the lover, husband, father, friend — he still lives in God, who is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

Are such lives unnoticed? Nay, they are "compassed about with witnesses." The galleries are filled! The Master himself looks on; and every word that his diffident follower speaks in the interest of truth and righteousness, every stretching forth of the helping hand, every denial of self, is recorded in heaven. It is said that the vibration of the atmosphere produced by speech is so rapidly diffused that within twenty hours the entire aerial envelope of the earth

is affected by it. Our life puts on a serious aspect when we pause to consider that the very air into which we are speaking is a vast auditorium, wherein our utterances are preserved forever. This puts an emphasis upon the precept, "Do ye nexte thynge." Let us not complain of the narrowness of our sphere, but rather seek earnestly to fill it. "Go down to thy house," said Jesus to the man of Gadara, who, in gratitude for healing, desired to follow Christ as a disciple — "Return to thine house and show how great things God hath done unto thee."

In memory of the quiet but useful lives of the many Aquilas and Priscillas whom we have known, let us do with our might whatsoever our hands find to do, at home, in the marketplace, in the fellowship of the evangel; and may the God whose eyes run to and fro through all the earth take knowledge of the work of our hands and establish it upon us.

VIII

APOLLOS: "MIGHTY IN THE SCRIPTURES"

Then said the Interpreter, "The Comforter be always with thee, good Christian, to guide thee in the way that leads to the city." So Christian went on his way, saying,

"Here I have seen things rare and profitable,
Things pleasant, dreadful, things to make me stable
In what I have begun to take in hand:
Then let me think on them, and understand
Wherefore they showed me were, and let me be
Thankful, O good Interpreter, to thee."

VIII

APOLLOS: "MIGHTY IN THE SCRIPTURES"

All that we know of Apollos is gathered from a single paragraph in the Acts of the Apostles with a few casual references in the Epistles. As we put together these scattered items of information we shall find ourselves reading

A Tale of Four Cities.

The paragraph referred to is as follows:

A certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia the

brethren wrote exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. Acts 18: 24-28.

I. Alexandria

The early life of Apollos was spent in this wonderful city, which was the meeting-place of Eastern and Western civilization in the early centuries of the Christian era. Here was the forum where Paganism, Judaism and Christianity met for what proved to be a conclusive discussion of their respective claims. The learning of the world was centered there. Greek philosophers touched elbows with Jewish rabbis and Christian fathers. The lines of controversy by degrees converged upon the Old Testament; for the better understanding of which a translation was made out of the Hebrew into the Greek language: and that translation, the Septuagint, remains as a monument of erudition to this day.

The name of Apollos would indicate that he was a Jew by adoption only. His par-

ents would scarcely have named him after Apollo had they not been worshipers of the pagan gods; though, like multitudes of others in Alexandria, they had probably become "proselytes," that is, worshipers of the true God.

In any case it is certain that Apollos was "instructed in the way of the Lord." In his study of the Old Testament he had discovered the golden thread of Messianic prophecy running through all its pages from the protevangel of Paradise, respecting the Seed of woman who was to come in the fulness of time to "bruise the serpent's head," down to Malachi's glowing vision of the Sun of Righteousness who should "arise with healing in his wings."

Then came the news from a far country that John the Baptist was heralding the near approach of the Messiah and calling upon the people to repent and prepare the way before him. To this the young student of the Scriptures responded with a ready heart. So far he was able to go and no farther. He knew only "the baptism of John," that is, the baptism unto repentance

and preparation for the coming of Christ. He lived up to his light and was prepared to welcome more light whenever it should come to him. What more does the good God ask of any man?

This is the secret of "growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ." An earnest seeker after truth — with no hoodwink over his eyes and an open door for revelations from above — will always find it. And his path will surely lead him into the presence of him who said "I am the Truth." For so it is written, "To him that hath shall be given." There is always more light ahead for those who walk as children of the day.

II. Ephesus

So it happened that Apollos "came to Ephesus." Though no reason is given for his coming to that city of blind Jews and pleasure-loving pagans, it may be surmised from the fact that on his arrival he immediately "spake and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus" up to the full measure of his light. His information was

limited to what he had been able to learn of the Messiah from his acquaintance with the Old Testament *plus* the teaching of John the Baptist: but this was enough to move him with an earnest desire to propagate the truth. It was like a fire in his bones; for as a man of fervent spirit he could not rest until he had told these benighted people the Good News.

What a man have we here! He did not, like Jonah, have to be told twice to go with his message of hope to a people who needed it, nor did he fall asleep in the hold of a vessel on his way. Here he is, "speaking boldly in the synagogue." Great things are to be expected of such a man.

It chanced that among his hearers in the synagogue were two people who had been converted through the ministry of Paul on his previous visit to this city: the tent-maker Aquila and his wife Priscilla. (Acts 18: 1–3.) They were humble folk, by no means on a level with Apollos in education or social life; but their hearts went out to him as one feeling his way through the twilight toward the Truth. They ventured to ap-

proach him, talked with him, "took him unto them, and expounded unto him the Way of God more accurately." (The name by which the followers of Christ were called at that time was "people of that Way.")

Let us get this picture before us: A tent-maker's shop; a man and his wife busy at their trade; before them an Alexandrian scholar drinking in their words. Was ever a Theological Seminary like that? But what if our Theological Seminaries were to make a note of it? What if Aquila and Priscilla chairs were established for the "more accurate exposition of the Way"? Why not? Theology is good but religion is better. The Way is everything. Doctors of Divinity are mere lay figures unless they are evangelists over and above all.

III. Corinth

Now turn to First Corinthians 3: 1–6:

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet

now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

It thus appears that Apollos had found his way to Corinth. (Acts 19:1.) Here was a larger parish for him. The city swarmed with tradesmen and pleasure-seekers from everywhere. What a field for a preacher equipped as Apollos now was with the panoply of the Gospel! By reason of his learning and eloquence he forged to the front. It was not long before the members of the Corinthian Church began to contrast his upstanding figure and commanding oratory with the "mean presence" and modest speech of Paul their former pastor. Then came a division into parties. Some said, "I am of Paul," others, "I am of Apollos," and they were pulling apart. Alas, that there should be such divisions in the body of Christ!

Up to this time, so far as we know, Paul and Apollos had never met. News of the sad state of affairs in the Corinthian Church reached Paul as he was off somewhere in Macedonia, on his second missionary journey; and he immediately sat down and wrote to Corinth about it. (1 Cor. 3:1–9.) His reference to the trouble gives us a clear sidelight into the character of Paul. He betrays not a sign of envy or jealousy toward this unknown man who had apparently undermined him in the affections of his former parishioners, but sinks all personal considerations in fraternal magnanimity and loyalty to Christ. (1 Cor. 4:6.)

Not long after this Paul met Apollos and a friendship began which continued during the remainder of their lives. It was in Ephesus, about A.D. 57. (1 Cor. 16:12.) The probability is that Apollos had left Corinth on account of the feeling of partisanship that developed among the Christians there. Paul wanted him to go back but he would not. "I besought him much," he says, "but it was not at all his will." Here was a strife between two brethren, neither of whom was

willing to win glory at the cost of the other: a blessed exhibit of "the mind that was in Christ Jesus," who said, "Whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all."

IV. Nicopolis

Eight years have passed. Paul, after his imprisonment in the Prætorian camp at Rome, has "escaped from the mouth of the lion." * Old, half blind and worn out, he straightway plans another missionary journey. It reminds one of the old couplet

> "Tumble me down, and I will sit
> Exultant on my ruins yet."

He takes ship with a group of helpers and, leaving Titus on the island of Crete to minister in that difficult field, sails on to Macedonia where he pauses to rest and preach in the ancient city of Nicopolis. While there he writes a letter to Titus for his encouragement and sends it by the hand of Apollos, who is accompanied by a "lawyer" named Zenas, of whom we know

* Nero, for obvious reasons, was familiarly known as "The Lion."

no more. (Titus 3: 13.) Not long after the writing of this letter Paul was re-arrested and carried back to Rome to his execution. This ends the story of Paul and his friend.

The story of Apollos, though so brief and fragmentary, gives us the portrait of a man remarkable *first* as a scholar, *second* as an orator of unusual ability; *third* as an enthusiast, "fervent in spirit"; and *fourth,* as "one mighty in the Scriptures." This last characteristic was the secret of his power.

And this power is within the reach of every Christian who will take it. There is many a humble mother in Israel, unfamiliar with the wisdom of the schools, who will receive titular honors in heaven because, to quote the words of Cowper, she "just knew, and knew no more, her Bible true."

In Froude's life of John Bunyan he says that while writing "Pilgrim's Progress" in Bedford jail, he had only two books; but "one of these," he adds, "was the Bible, which of itself alone is a liberal education." Many a man has found it so.

The best people in the world are those

who know the Bible and live up to it. The most efficient preachers are those whose preaching is in line with the promise, "My word shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." The best course of study ever marked out for those who would fit themselves for usefulness in the Christian life is that which Paul prescribed for a young friend: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2: 15.)

IX

"ONE MNASON OF CYPRUS"

So thither they came; and he called at the door, and the old man within knew his tongue as soon as ever he heard it; so he opened the door, and they all came in. Then said Mnason their host, "How far have ye come to-day?" So they said, "From the house of Gaius our friend." "I promise you," said he, "you have gone a good stitch. You may well be weary: sit down." So they sat down.

IX

"ONE MNASON OF CYPRUS"

It was when Paul was on the closing lap of his third missionary journey that he first met this man. He was then going up to Jerusalem at peril of his life. His Ephesian friends came over to Miletus, where his ship was swinging at anchor, to give him farewell. In vain did they endeavor to dissuade him from his purpose: he was under orders and must go. Whereupon a number of them, among whom was Mnason, volunteered to accompany him. Here is Luke's account of it:

"There went with us also certain of the disciples of Cæsarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge."

This is all the information we have respecting this man: but a good deal can be made of it by a proper use of the imagination. There are people who seem to think

that the only use of the imagination is in drawing the long bow: on the contrary it is impossible to tell the truth without it. A mere statement of fact is not the whole truth, any more than a man is a man until he have flesh on his bones. If one would read the sum total of anything he must always read between the lines.

Otherwise, for example, how are we going to read the story of the Prodigal Son? I say, "The father of the Prodigal used to come down to his gate day after day and look away beyond the hills and wonder and hope and"—"Not at all," says the literalist; "there is nothing like that in the story." Quite right; nevertheless, the story wouldn't be wholly true without it.

I say, "When the boy came back his father was so glad to see him that he not only 'went out to meet him while he was yet a great way off' but threw his arms around his neck and drowned his voice with kisses." "That's pure invention," says Simon Pure. But let us see. You remember the speech the penitent boy composed when he was sitting on the trough in the swine-field: "I will

arise and go unto my father and say, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants' ": and you remember how he arrived with his carefully prepared speech on the tip of his tongue but only delivered a part of it. Just as he was about to apply for a situation as hired servant there came an interruption; that was when "his father fell upon his neck and kissed him." Now put two and two together and you can understand why the speech of the prodigal ended with a dash. So I say it is impossible to get the whole truth without using one's imagination in reading between the lines.

I. A moment ago it was observed that Paul's first meeting with Mnason was on the seashore at Miletus. Of course the story does not say so; but why should it say "*one* Mnason"? If Paul and he had been previously acquainted is it likely that he would have been referred to in that way?

II. We are informed that Mnason was "of Cyprus," an island in the Mediterranean which played no unimportant part in

history. Cato, Cicero, Alexander and no end of other celebrities were in one way or another associated with it. To have a home in Cyprus was to be a man of some importance in those days.

III. He had also a home in Jerusalem; from which we infer that he was a man of substance. Not every one can afford, even in these prosperous times, to have a summer home in the mountains and a winter home by the sea. Moreover the house in Jerusalem was commodious enough to afford entertainment for the proprietor's friends. Thus everything seems to intimate that Mnason was a prosperous man. And, in his prosperity, it would appear that he regarded himself as a steward, using aright what the Lord had entrusted to him.

IV. He was "a disciple." It was not the common fashion as yet to speak of the followers of Christ as "Christians"; but to be called disciples, or pupils of Christ, was a great honor. To sit at his feet, learning of him, is to be growing in wisdom every day. This was why he said of Mary of Bethany that she had "chosen the good part which

should not be taken away from her." (Luke 10: 42.)

V. He was "an old disciple." In the year 46 Paul had visited Cyprus, on his first missionary journey; but, apart from the conversion of Sergius Paulus, the Governor of the island, there was little to show for his ministry there. (Acts 13: 4–12.) The probability is that Mnason was somewhere else at the time; but on his return he would be likely to hear all about the apostle's message: and possibly this was when he accepted Christ. If so he was now fifteen years "old" in the Christian life.

VI. But the better rendering is "an early disciple." (R. V.) As such he may have heard the preaching of Christ himself and been converted by it. Or perhaps he was among those Cretans (Acts 2:11) who, in the open court at Jerusalem, under the power of the Holy Ghost, were "pricked in their heart," crying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" If so, he may then have heeded the call of Peter, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." This would make him thirty

years "old" in the Christian life. A "disciple" for thirty years and still going to school. This is as it should be: for in the University of Truth one is never too old to learn. And think what a fund of helpful experience this faithful pupil must have acquired in the meantime; how he must have grown in the knowledge of Christ and of the great verities and practicalities that center in him!

VII. He was a broad-minded Christian. How do we know that? From the fact that he was in accord with Paul's missionary work. If Paul were to present his plans in some of our modern churches there are professing Christians who would say, "Why go to the regions beyond when there are so many of the unconverted here in Jerusalem? 'Charity begins at home.' " But Mnason's charity, while it began at home, was not so wizened as to stay there. He may have heard the Master say, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature"; and he knew that followers of Christ could only fulfill that commission by going, and

keeping on going, until they should have carried the Gospel to the last man.

VIII. And, finally, Mnason was a hospitable man. His entertainment of Paul was, however, more than mere compliance with a custom which was universal in the Orient of those days: it was a happy recognition of the fellowship of saints. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers," says one of the inspired writers, "for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Hebrews 13:2; cf Gen. 19:1–3.) The sojourn of Paul in Mnason's home in Jerusalem must, indeed, have been like an angel's visit. What an interchange of rich experience there would be between these veterans, the old missionary and his genial host!

Here we shall have to leave them. Paul's "patient continuance" was drawing to a close. While a guest in that home in Jerusalem he was arrested and placed in the Castle of Antonia; thence to prison in Cæsarea; thence to Rome and a martyr's death. But old Mnason may have lingered on.

"Old Mnason?" What is finer than a

Lapland winter? In the rare atmosphere of a life maturing under the shadow of the Cross one can look so far both ways! As one's vessel leaves her moorings the skipper toasts "The friends astern!" and farther out, "The friends ahead!" A mother in Israel, much given to gazing upward, said, "I always see the letter W yonder, as plain as if it were written across the sky." It stood for "Welcome." The Lord be praised for such an outlook! But, if we live to grow old, may we never be so engaged with either the retrospect or the prospect as not to be able to address ourselves with holy zeal and purpose to the business immediately in hand; which is to make each passing moment of our lives endear us more and more to the Father's heart by loyalty to his beloved Son.

X

EPAPHRODITUS: COMRADE IN ARMS

Now Mr. Great-heart was a strong man, so he was not afraid of a lion. But yet when they were come up to the place where the lions were, the boys that went before were now glad to cringe behind, for they were afraid of the lions; so they stepped back and went behind. At this their guide smiled and said, "How now, my boys; do you love to go before when no danger doth approach, and love to come behind so soon as the lions appear?"

X

EPAPHRODITUS: COMRADE IN ARMS

THE story is of a journey made by a kind-hearted man to relieve the need of an old minister who had worn himself out in the service of Christ. It is told in a nutshell. See Philippians 2: 25–30 and 4: 18.

The most important parish Paul ever had was in the Prætorian camp at Rome. He was a prisoner, to be sure, chained to a soldier day and night: but he "dwelt in his own hired house and received all that came in unto him." (Acts 28: 30, 31.) He began his ministry there A.D. 63, and for two years continued to teach "those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

In giving an account of his circumstances at this time he says, "I suffer trouble as an evil-doer even unto bonds: but the word of

God is not bound." (2 Tim. 2:9.) He could always count on one hearer at least, namely, the soldier chained to his wrist: and we may be sure he preached the Gospel to him. There were other soldiers, too, who would be talking with one another over what Paul had to say. These men of the Roman army were recruited from all nations and liable to be sent at any moment to a remote part of the world; and certainly they would carry the Gospel with them. Besides, there were "members of Cæsar's household," that is, influential persons attached to the imperial service, who would naturally desire to hear Paul: and we are definitely informed that some of these were converted to Christ. (Phil. 4:22.) It is probable also that other citizens of Rome would be curious to interview a prisoner whose extraordinary learning was everywhere spoken of.

So Paul had no lack of an audience. And if there were any spare moments he knew how to fill them. Four of his weightiest Epistles were written during this imprisonment, being dictated to some friendly amanuensis and signed with a chained hand.

Those letters, like leaves of the tree of life, went fluttering out to the scattered churches and down the ages even to us.

A busy parish, indeed, but a wearing one. Paul was now an old man, weary with a lifetime of unremitting toil and burdened with "oft infirmities." A sick old man! And poor; for being unable to longer support himself by his trade as a tent-maker, he was, like Elijah by the brook Cherith, wholly dependent on the ravens of God. And the ravens did not fail him.

In the city of Philippi, away in Macedonia, the Christians heard that their old friend and minister was in need. What was to be done? A "donation party," of course. They made up a purse and chose a trustworthy man to carry it to him. Here is where Epaphroditus comes in. He was the messenger. In acknowledging the gift Paul says:

"I have all and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God."

On reaching Rome the messenger at once betook himself to the Prætorian camp. The last time he had seen Paul was probably five or six years before in Philippi, where the Christians kept the Passover with him. (Acts 20: 6.) It is safe to say that Epaphroditus was greatly moved by the change which the intervening years of toil and suffering had wrought upon his old friend. But no time was lost in condolences; the question was, how could he help him? It was not enough to relieve his physical wants; he needed some one to stand by him in his ministry; and this Epaphroditus resolved to do.

He must have been a man of independent means: else how could he afford to make the long journey from Philippi to Rome and prolong his absence for an indefinite time? He must have remained with Paul for some months, probably more than a year — a long vacation for a man who was far from home and travelling at his own charges. But what a vacation it must have been for him; listening to Paul's "breathing thoughts in words that burn" and helping him in a hundred ways!

As the time drew near for his return a letter was written for him to carry back to the Philippian Church. In the beginning of this letter Paul says:

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now."

And further on:

"I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labor and fellow-soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me."

By this we are given to understand (1) that Epaphroditus while at Rome was taken

desperately ill, being "nigh unto death"; (2) that his sickness was the result of his earnest devotion to "the work of Christ"; (3) that he was homesick, "longing after you all"; (4) that somehow his friends at Philippi were advised of his illness and were "sorrowful" on that account; (5) that when Epaphroditus heard of their sorrow he was "full of heaviness"; (6) that his recovery was due to a special "mercy"; and (7) that as he was now returning to Philippi, he and Paul with all his other friends would unite in thanksgiving to God.

Now above all this, observe the threefold tribute which Paul pays to this man.

I. He calls him "my brother."

On a gravestone in a churchyard in England is a name followed by this brief inscription: "The Friend of Milton." What honor in those simple words; but how much more to have been a brother of Paul! We are all sons of God by creation; but alas! alienated through sin. Were it not for the interposition of Christ we should be hopelessly disinherited; but through him we receive "the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba,

Father"; and so, being sons, we are also heirs, "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away."

Not only so, we are thus brought into a new relation with each other by virtue of which we rightly call ourselves "brethren." All this through him who, by his sacrificial interest in our welfare, became the "First-born among many brethren," that is to say, the Elder Brother of all who believe in him.

But Paul meant even more than this. For, as Christ himself had a special place in his heart for John, Peter and James, "the chosen three," so we naturally come closer to some of our friends than to others. It is obvious that Epaphroditus, whose name means "lovable," had made for himself a singular place in Paul's affection. How indeed could it have been otherwise, considering that year of intimacy and mutual ministry on the Palatine Hill?

II. He also calls him "my companion in labor."

This must mean that he made himself useful in his ministry. Every pastor knows

what a gracious and blessed thing it is to have the support and co-operation of the laymen and lay-women of the parish. There are all sorts of people on the formal roll of every church; some of them recalcitrant. more of them smilingly indifferent, but others "companions in labor."

In looking back over the fifty years of my ministry I pay tribute gratefully not only to my Elders and Deacons, but to many "ministering women" and oftentimes humble men who, like Aaron and Hur, have held up my hands in the heat and burden of the day. How could I ever have gone on without them?

In the gallery of the London Tabernacle a lone old woman used to sit, Sunday after Sunday, picking out a score of strange faces in the congregation for whom to pray during the week. Any one would have said she was past her usefulness: but when Spurgeon officiated at her funeral he gratefully referred to her as his "best helper." Who knows how many souls she had prayed into the kingdom of God?

III. Paul's last word as to Epaphroditus

is his best one: he calls him "my fellow-soldier."

There is something pathetic in Paul's frequent references to military service. He was himself the last man to be chosen as a soldier; but how ambitious he was to put on the whole armor of Christ and serve him in the high places of the field! And was ever a more gallant knight than he, or ever a more puissant defender of the faith?

But they say, "The faith needs no defence; it can defend itself." It is slackers who speak that way. Christians who make their influence tell are such as hold themselves in readiness to maintain the truth with a kindly but uncompromising front against all comers. "Here I stand," said Luther; "I cannot otherwise; God help me"; and with his hammer on the Chapel door at Wittenberg he sent the thunders of the Reformation rolling around the world.

Such a man was Paul; and in Epaphroditus he found a kindred spirit. In Rome they were under the shadow of the pagan gods. When God was blasphemed or the Cross reviled or the Scriptures assailed

could these two co-workers in arms keep silence, think you? Nay, as "fellow-soldiers" they stood with shields overlapped and lances poised for the defence of truth and righteousness.

> O God, to us may grace be given
> To follow in their train!

XI

ONESIMUS: A SLAVE

Now a little before it was day good Christian, as one half amazed, brake out into this passionate speech: "What a fool," quoth he, "am I, thus to lie in a dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom, called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle." Then said Hopeful, "That is good news; good brother, pluck it out of thy bosom and try."

XI

ONESIMUS: A SLAVE

THE story of Onesimus is a melodrama in five scenes.

Scene I. In the house of Philemon at Colosse, A.D. 56.

For two years Paul had been preaching in Ephesus and the adjacent towns. One of these nearby towns was Colosse, where Paul made the acquaintance of Philemon, a weaver of prominence. It is quite possible that Paul, who made his living by the kindred trade of tentmaking, had applied to Philemon for work. In due time, almost as a matter of course, this weaver was converted to Christ. His wife Apphia and his son Archippus were baptized with him: and presently we hear of "the church in the house of Philemon," which was destined to play an important part in subsequent events. In this house Paul was accustomed to hold divine service, with the family and neigh-

bors gathered about him. The slaves of Philemon were also present, of whom he probably had a considerable number engaged in his shop and warehouses.

Get the picture in mind: Paul preaching in an open court; before him Philemon with his wife Apphia and his son Archippus; friends, neighbors and many slaves among whom was Onesimus, his face troubled and resentful. He was probably a captive of war, the Roman custom being to reduce all such to slavery. If so, his bitter heart was poor soil for Gospel seed. The injustice of his bonds rankled within him. He was at odds with fate, with his master and with God.

Scene II. In the Prætorian camp at Rome. A.D. 64.

Eight years have passed. In the meantime many things have happened. Paul had gone hither and yon on his missionary journeys, crossing deserts and climbing mountains to preach the Gospel of Christ. He had endured "perils of robbers, perils by his own countrymen, perils by the heathen, perils in the city, perils in the wilderness,

perils in the sea." He had known "weariness and painfulness, hunger and thirst, fastings often, cold and nakedness." He had been stoned more than once and had suffered shipwreck. Five times he had "received forty stripes save one." He had tasted prison fare in many cities. He had spent two dreary years in the Castle at Cæsarea; after which, falling back on his rights as a Roman citizen, he had made his appeal to Cæsar. He had now reached Rome. Though a prisoner in the barracks he was allowed a certain measure of freedom, being permitted to dwell in "his own hired house" and to receive his friends.

One day a wretched man in rags and tatters came to visit him. He was worn and emaciated, with a hunted look in his eyes. It was the slave Onesimus, who had heard the Gospel in the house of Philemon so long ago. Paul received him, won his confidence and brought him to the saving knowledge of Christ. Then came his confession: he had escaped from his master and had made his way through danger and difficulty to Rome, a thousand miles away. It sounds like the

stories we used to hear of negroes fleeing through the Dismal Swamp with bloodhounds baying behind them. The runaway had hoped, no doubt, to lose himself among the throngs of Rome; for there is no wilderness like a great city: but conscience pursued him. He confessed to Paul that he was not only a fugitive but a thief. He had robbed his master. How could he become a Christian with that frightful shadow over him? The advice of Paul was that he should at once return to his master and give himself up.

Scene III. On shipboard, somewhere on the Adriatic.

The slave, in pursuance of Paul's advice, has taken passage for Colosse. He carries with him a precious scroll, a letter addressed by Paul to his old master. He takes it from beneath the lapel of his cloak and reads it. Here it is.*

"Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved and fellow-worker, and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house: Grace to you

* The Epistle to Philemon.

and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my prayers, hearing of thy love and of the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints; that the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual in the knowledge of every good thing which is in you, unto Christ. For I had much joy and comfort in thy love; because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through thee, brother.

Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus. I beseech thee for my child whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus, who once was unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me: whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart: whom I would fain have kept with me, that in my behalf he might minister unto me in the bonds of the Gospel: but without thy mind I would do nothing: that thy goodness should not be as of necessity but of free will. For perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever: no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself. But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee aught, put that to mine account: I

Paul write it with mine own hand; I will repay it: that I say not unto thee that thou owest to me even thine own self besides. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my heart in Christ.

Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say. But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you.

Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus, saluteth thee: and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

This is, in some ways, the most remarkable of all Paul's letters. (1) Observe its brevity: only twenty-five verses. (2) Its courtesy: it has been called "the polite Epistle." (3) Its rhetorical finish. Most of Paul's letters are distinguished for strength and directness; this betrays the scholarly culture of a man who had graduated from the University of Jerusalem. (4) It is the only one of his letters addressed to a layman. The others are either general, parochial or pastoral. (5) It was written with Paul's own hand. In other cases he

made use of an amanuensis; which was necessary not only by reason of his age and infirmities but because he was a prisoner in bonds. Here, however, the writing is his very own; and his friendship for Philemon is emphasized by that fact. It is safe to say the lines were uncertain and the characters rude; but what would we not give to see that tremulous autograph, "I, Paul, with mine own hand"; "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

In this letter Philemon is enjoined to receive his former slave and forgive all. Not even the theft must be remembered against him. "If he hath wronged thee at all," writes Paul, "or oweth thee aught, put that to mine account. I, Paul, write it with mine own hand; I will repay it." This sounds like a promissory note; but considering the financial status of Paul it could scarcely be expected that he would ever pay it. He reminds Philemon, however, that he has a running account with him which he proposes to draw on: "That I say not unto thee that thou owest to me even thine own self besides." But he engages that Onesimus shall

make all possible restitution, saying, "He who was in time past unprofitable shall now be profitable unto thee." Further still he enjoins Philemon to receive his slave no longer as a slave but as a fellow-Christian, saying, "If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself." Onesimus had formerly been a shiftless bondman; but henceforth he was to be not only a "brother beloved" but a profit-sharer in the service of Christ. Here verily is the Christian spirit; for in this fellowship there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all in all.

So runs the philosophy of the Gospel. Down go the artificial walls of caste! How hard it is for us to realize it! We are slow to admit that blood is thicker than water; and that in the atoning blood of Christ a kinship is created which bridges the gulf between prince and peasant, between master and man, between the stately housewife and Cinderella at her kitchen fire.

Scene IV. At the doorway of Philemon's house in Colosse.

The critical moment of the runaway's life

has come. He has been sustained thus far by a Power above his own; shall that Power now fail him? His heart is in his throat as he approaches Philemon's house. He knocks; the door opens; he stands face to face with his old master. Of what is Philemon thinking, with that masterful look in his eyes? Of the bastinado? He takes the scroll and opens it. As he reads he changes countenance: the angry wrinkles are smoothed out; a warm hand is extended, "Welcome, Onesimus, my brother in Christ!"

So ends the story, like the "Mystery of Edwin Drood." But tradition furnishes a sequel; it says that Onesimus became a faithful toiler in the shop of Philemon; that he lived a consistent Christian life; that in later years he became pastor of the Colossian Church, and that he finally sealed his faithfulness with martyrdom, going up to heaven in a chariot of fire.

Scene V. At Heaven's Gate.

What a meeting between Master and slave! They have been together in glory for nineteen hundred years. How little now

must seem all differences of birth, of culture and adventitious circumstance, such as once so widely separated them.

There are two concluding thoughts that press upon us. One is, *Progress is a fact.*

The slave-market in Rome was the industrial center of the world at the beginning of the Christian era. The imperial armies went forth to conquest and returned with long processions of captives who were then exposed for sale. There were only two thousand patricians or independent men in the city of Rome and half a million slaves. The auction block furnished the shops with toilers, the arena with gladiators and the brothels with inmates. These slaves lived like cattle in stalls or *ergastulæ;* and when they died they were thrown to the fishes or cast into pits. All this was horrible beyond words. God knew it; and he proposed to do away with it. But his ways are not our ways. Christ came into the world to break every chain and bid the oppressed go free. The Gospel is full of abolitionism; but not like that of John Brown of Osawatomie. There is more of patient love and less of battle in it.

The Kingdom of Heaven is likened to leaven which works noiselessly but in due time leavens the lump. Our Lord set certain great principles in motion which were destined to bring about the desired result. He gave the world his Golden Rule: "Do unto others as ye would be done by." How gloriously that principle has been at work! We are told by scientists that leaven is a mass of living cells; that fermentation is not death and decay but a manifestation of life. So is God's love in the world. God is love, and love is life. God has manifested himself in Christ, who said, "I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly." His Gospel is love alive. Its influence is transforming the world. Men and nations are drawing closer together and seeing face to face and eye to eye. We may not precipitate the Golden Age; but we can lend a hand to bring it in. We can fall in with those who follow the conquering Christ and, by interpreting divine love in terms of practical life, we may hasten the coming of the time when all alike shall enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The world has been drawing nearer and nearer to the brotherhood of man as it has learned more and more of the Fatherhood of God. All civilization is to-day embraced within the charmed circle which we call Christendom; and of the nations within its bounds there is not one which tolerates slavery. "He that believeth shall not make haste."

The other concluding thought is of *the transforming power of the Gospel.*

In Luther's exposition of this Scripture he says "We are all Onesimi"; by which I suppose he means that we are all fugitives from justice; "for there is no difference; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." We are runaways from truth and duty, from conscience and from God: and by the mediation of Christ we are brought back and reconciled. Christ stands for us at the bar of offended Justice; and the plea which he there makes is the very same that Paul made for Onesimus; to wit, "If this man hath wronged thee or oweth thee aught, put that to mine account. I, Christ, with mine own hand: I will repay it."

Nor is that all. He proposes to reconstruct us; so that whereas we have been unprofitable servants we may now be profitable unto God. He turns us right about face. He regenerates us by his Spirit; so that "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." He who truly submits himself to the power of Christ gets a new mind, a new heart, a new conscience and a new will. Is there any power on earth except the Gospel which can do that? We speak of the mystery of regeneration; but however mysterious it may be there is no denying it. The miracle is constantly going on. How often have we seen a drunkard taken out of the gutter and set upon his feet by the grace of God! How often have we seen a forlorn woman taken out of her shame and restored to character and self-respect by the Gospel! We may not be able to explain it; but there it is.

Blessed be God for his unspeakable gift!

XII

SOSTHENES: "MY BROTHER"

After this it was noised abroad that Mr. Valiant-for-truth was taken with a summons by the same post as the other, and had this for a token that the summons was true; that his "pitcher was broken at the fountain." When he understood it he called for his friends and told them of it. Then said he, "I am going to my Father's; and though with great difficulty I have got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it."

XII

SOSTHENES: "MY BROTHER"

We have only two passing references to this man. But we remember that it was a pair of faint footprints in the sand that gave Robinson Crusoe a companion in his loneliness and changed the desolate island of Juan Fernandez into a Republic.

The first reference to Sosthenes is in the year 54, in connection with Paul's second missionary journey. On reaching Corinth the apostle settled down to an evangelistic campaign which lasted a year and a half. He began preaching in the synagogue, persuading the Jews that "this Jesus is the Christ." The master of the synagogue, by name Crispus, was converted and — losing his position, of course — was succeeded by Sosthenes, who appears to have been a devoted Jew.

This was the beginning of trouble. Paul was driven out of the synagogue and made his headquarters "hard by" in the house of one Justus, where many Gentiles were converted during eighteen months of Paul's "teaching the word of God among them." This led to the arrest of Paul on a trumped-up charge; and, inasmuch as Sosthenes was in court and conspicuous there as the ruler of the synagogue, there is good ground for assuming that he was the complainant in the case. The proceedings are recorded thus:

"And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if it be a question of words and names and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. And he drave them from the judgment seat."

This afforded the Gentiles an occasion for venting their spleen against the despised Jews, of which they took immediate advan-

tage by beating Sosthenes "before the judgment seat."

It is safe to say that Sosthenes crept away from that disorderly court with a bitter heart that day: but possibly the beating which he there received was the best thing that could have happened to him. It may have turned his thoughts toward Paul as a fellow-sufferer and moved him toward a more reasonable view of the Gospel. This is one of the important uses of adversity. Simon of Cyrene might never have become a Christian but for the fact that the mob on Via Dolorosa seized upon him and "compelled him to bear the cross." Luther was converted by the sudden and violent death of a companion. Many a prodigal has been brought to his senses by a famine in the land.

> "Blest be the sorrow, kind the storm
> That drives us nearer home."

In any case, something must have occurred to reverse the attitude of Sosthenes toward Christ; for the next and only time we hear of him is five years later, A.D. 59,

where he appears as a companion of Paul. The First Epistle to the Corinthians, which was written at Philippi in that year, begins thus:

> Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

If this was the same Sosthenes — and I see no reason for thinking otherwise — he had followed many of his coreligionists into the conclusion that "this Jesus is the Christ." The man whom Paul could call his "brother" must have been very near to him. Could it possibly mean that Paul, so strenuous in maintaining his own dignity as an apostle, was prepared to receive this man into the fraternity of "the Apostolic succession"? If to be an apostle is to be "a sent one," then all who go in pursuance of the Great Commission are apostles by divine right.

However that may be, it certainly means that Sosthenes was a yoke-fellow of Paul's in the service of Christ; else how could he yoke up with him in a greeting "to them that are called and sanctified in Christ Jesus"! For to what are we "called" but to his service; and unto what are we "sanctified" but the holiness that expresses itself in loyalty to him?

But "my brother" means more even than that; it designates the closest tie of personal friendship. No man ever craved friendship more than Paul; his letters are heavy with loneliness whenever no comrade is beside him. The handclasp was everything to him.

If a single lesson only is to be drawn from the brief monograph of this man, let it be *The Importance of Friendship in the Christian Life.* "Two are better than one: . . . for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up."

A youth on coming to the city is naturally disposed to clasp hands with almost anybody who greets him in a friendly way. It is so

lonely in this populous wilderness that the first comer is likely to be first served. Yet what immeasurable possibilities of good or evil influences are in that first handclasp! Character, usefulness, happiness, even eternal destiny may be wrapped up in it.

A man once bought a parrot of a sea-captain and found to his horror that it had contracted the habit of swearing. In the hope of reforming it he borrowed from a pious neighbor another parrot that had been taught to say its prayers. The natural thing came to pass; both parrots were presently engaged in a vigorous competition of profanity.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the friend who is to be "my brother" must be in sympathy with me in the important plans and purposes of my life. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" My friend must have tastes and ambitions like mine; else he cannot be truly responsive to me. We must be agreed as to the underlying principles of life. Sympathy suggests the magnet; antipathy, the repulsion of the negative pole. Two persons who are antipathetic

may get on comfortably as long as they keep their distance; but they are mutually repellant at close quarters.

This is the reason why no Christian can wisely strike hands in a covenant of friendship with one who denies the truth of the Gospel, which is the very heart and center of his life. To the one Christ is all in all; to the other He hath no form nor comeliness and there is no beauty that he should desire Him.

It is recorded in the biography of John Angell James that at the age of thirteen he was taken out of school and apprenticed to a linen-draper. On the first night, on being assigned to a dormitory with other apprentices, he waited anxiously as they were retiring to see whether there were any Christians among them. He seemed to be the only one. All went to bed without saying their prayers; and he, lacking the courage that makes heroes, followed the fashion. This continued for a fortnight, when an incident occurred that changed the whole tenor of his life. A new apprentice came who, on retiring, knelt down beside his bed; and little

John did likewise. That was the beginning of a lifelong friendship. "I shall always bless God," he wrote, "for the friendship of Charley B." Happy is the Christian youth who, in like manner, finds a kindred spirit and "grapples him to his soul with hooks of steel."

One Friend there is who stands the test of all ordeals and is faithful unto death — aye, and beyond it. He is a Friend "that sticketh closer than a brother." The proof of his fidelity has been put to the utmost strain and endured it.

The friendship of Jonathan for his rustic friend David was effectively tried and approved when he left the palace and went out after David, then an exile hunted like a partridge among the hills, and "sought him in the wood." This is precisely what Christ did for us in our extremity; when there was no eye to pity and no arm to help, He "sought us in the wood." He made bare His arm in our behalf, befriended us, took our burden upon Him, died to save us. He is a friend in all sorts of weather. His promise is, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

Blest friendship of Jesus! It stands all tests, endures all trials, triumphs over death itself and lasts forever. He is the "first-born among many brethren," the Elder Brother of us all. A friend so true has reason to expect fidelity in us.

XIII

TITUS: "MY PARTNER"

"Come a little way with me, and I will teach thee about the way thou must go. Look before thee; dost thou see this narrow way? It was cast up by the patriarchs, prophets, Christ and the apostles, and it is as straight as a rule can make it. This is the way thou must go."

XIII

TITUS: "MY PARTNER"

PAUL had a warm place in his heart for earnest youth. Three of his most faithful helpers were young men. There was John Mark, son of the widow Mary of Jerusalem; who set out with Paul on his first missionary journey and, after flinching in the face of danger, recovered himself and became as unswervingly true as steel. Then Timothy, "the gentle youth of Lystra," who was chosen to be Paul's courier on his second journey, his successor in the pastorate of the Ephesian Church and his "true yokefellow" to the very end. And now comes Titus, who by reason of his singular tact, good judgment and unfailing courage was selected for many difficult tasks.

John Mark was a Jew by lineage; Timothy was of mixed blood, his father a Greek, and his mother a Jewess; but Titus was an

unadulterated pagan (Gal. 2:3), brought up to worship the Olympian gods.

He was one of Paul's converts. This is indicated by the words "mine own son" (Titus 1:4). Paul was foster-father to all the young men referred to: and there is no tie of consanguinity so close and tender as that which binds the brought soul to the bringer. There is an anticipation of the very joy of heaven in it.

I. The first mention of Titus is in connection with the Council at Jerusalem in the year 52.

This was just after the first missionary journey; when the mother church at Jerusalem was insisting that Gentile converts must become proselytes to Judaism and submit to the requirements of the Levitical law, as a sort of half-way house on the way to a Christian profession. Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, felt called upon to champion their rights. It was this that took him to the Council at Jerusalem. He was accompanied by Barnabas his colleague and Titus (Gal. 2:1–5). There was a special reason for taking Titus with him, as we shall see.

At this far distance it is scarcely possible to realize the vital issues that were involved in the conclusions of that early Council. A candle was lighted there which was destined to throw its beams along all the succeeding ages. The question under discussion was centered on Titus; who, as it appears, demanded admission to the Church on the sole condition of faith. He stood on his two feet as the original Non-conformist, declining to yield an inch to the Judaizers who as Paul says "sought to bring us into bondage." All praise to the courage of this young man! Let him line up with Luther in the great protest, "Here I stand; I cannot otherwise; God help me!" For the note that rang out in that Council was the very same that fifteen centuries later was destined to await the dormant religious world; namely, the doctrine of Justification by Faith, which was then characterized as "the article of a standing or a falling church."

II. The next appearance of Titus was eight years later, A.D. 60. A year before this Paul had written his First Epistle to the Corinthians; which is the severest of his let-

ters. In his absence the members of the Corinthian Church had fallen into evil ways. They had separated into parties, saying "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos" and "I of Cephas." Moreover, many had been led away by false teachers into all manner of fantastic heresies: while still others had drifted back into complicity with the worship of false gods. One man in particular, evidently an influential member of the church, was known to be living in shameless sin and yet nothing had been done. No wonder Paul's letter was filled with burning words of reproof. No wonder, either, that it stirred up a great commotion in the Corinthian Church. So hot was the indignation of the people there against Paul that it really looked as if they would have nothing more to do with him.

What was to be done? It was useless for Paul to think of going to Corinth in his own behalf, since no welcome would await him. He might send some one to represent him, if only a man of sufficient tact, firmness and sound judgment could be found. Titus proved to be that man. He went to Corinth

and remained long enough to restore faith, harmony and discipline among the church members there.

Meanwhile Paul was carrying on an evangelistic campaign in Ephesus. He had arranged to meet Titus at Troas on his return from Corinth, and took pains to be there at the appointed time: but there were no signs of Titus. He improved the time, however, by preaching and with signal success. "A great and effectual door" was open before him (2 Cor. 2:12, 13), but so anxious was he to hear from Corinth that he had "no rest in his spirit." He set out accordingly to find Titus. This is the only occasion, so far as the record goes, when Paul ever failed to enter an open door.

A happy surprise awaited him. On meeting with Titus he learned that all the difficulties in Corinth had been satisfactorily arranged, and that the Christians there had settled down to fraternal co-operation in service. The news was so far beyond what Paul had expected or hoped for ("What sorrow of a godly sort, what earnest care, yea, what clearing of yourselves, what fear,

what indignation, what longing, what zeal, what avenging!") that he immediately sat down and wrote another letter, the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, which is as loving and congratulatory as the former Epistle was reproachful and severe.

The credit for this happy adjustment of affairs at Corinth was, under God, most largely due to Titus, who as Paul's intermediary had shown himself a diplomatist of singular ability. The way was now clear for the apostle to carry on his evangelistic work without let or hindrance. "I am filled with comfort," he writes, "I am exceeding joyful. God hath greatly comforted me by the coming of Titus." Elsewhere he speaks in more enthusiastic terms; "Thanks be unto God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ!" Old, weary and burdened with oft infirmities, he deems himself, in this new evidence of sustaining grace, a very conquerer, bringing new conquests to the glory of God.

But this was not all that Titus had accomplished at Corinth. While Paul was journeying hither and yon among the Gentiles,

his fellow-countrymen at Jerusalem were suffering from famine; and wherever he went he besought the Gentile Christians to honor the broad-minded fellowship of the Gospel by contributing to their need. The Corinthians had thus far made an inadequate response to his appeal; but the report of Titus encouraged Paul to renew that appeal with greater urgency. "Now he that ministereth seed to the sower increase the fruits of your righteousness." Whether they complied or not is another matter; but certainly Titus had opened the way for an enlargement of their hearts. One thing is clear; he believed, as all Christians should, that "social service," while not the primary function of the Church, must ever go hand in hand with the winning of souls.

III. The next we hear of Titus is five years later (A.D. 65) in the island of Crete. Meanwhile Paul had been arrested and confined as a prisoner in the Prætorian camp at Rome. On being brought to trial before Nero he was "delivered out of the mouth of the lion." (2 Tim. 4:16, 17.) When released he at once prepared for another missionary

journey. The ship on which he and his companions sailed touched at the island of Crete, where a few unorganized believers were making a brave struggle to maintain their Christian life. The people there were notorious for lying, indolence and sensuality: which was all the more reason why the Christians among them must be cared for. But who, in that little group of missionaries, could be trusted with so difficult a field? Who but Titus? No doubt the parting cost a wrench; but he was left behind, and the ship sailed on.

On reaching Nicopolis the old apostle was constrained to rest a while; and he took the occasion to write a letter of instruction and encouragement to the young minister in his hard parish (the Epistle to Titus). Here ends the record of Paul. It was probably in Nicopolis that he was rearrested and carried back to Rome where, after a brief confinement in the Mammertine jail, he was led forth to his execution under the walls.

IV. But we have one more reference to Titus, though brief and incidental. While Paul was in the Mammertine awaiting his

second trial he wrote a letter to Timothy in which he begged him to come. Listen to the lonely old man: "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. Only Luke (the ever faithful physician) is with me. Demas hath forsaken me; having loved this present world. (Poor Demas; this is all we know about him.) Crescens is gone to Galatia (on a necessary errand, no doubt, and Titus unto Dalmatia." (2 Tim. 4:9, 10.)

To Dalmatia — a pagan country up among the dangerous hills on the border of the Adriatic Sea! Why there? Had the *wanderlust* of Paul taken possession of him? Was he gone upon a mission of salvation to souls in the regions beyond? If so, all the blessings of the Lord go with him! So shall he best perpetuate the influence of his worn-out captain.

One word more before we part company with this young man. The word in Greek is *koinonos,* which our translators have aptly rendered "partner"; that is a yokefellow and profit-sharer in one's business. Now listen to Paul: "If any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner." (2 Cor. 8:23.) Great

credentials! Of no other of his companions does he speak in that way.

And it meant more than to be partner with Paul; for to join hands with Christ's workmen is to be partner with Christ himself in labor of love and patience of hope. The time may come when we shall hear further of Titus' mission to Dalmatia: in the meantime let us give heed to the injunction, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that"; and let us rest in the promise, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

XIV

PHŒBE: THE "DEACONESS"

Then they told him of Mercy, and how she had left her town and her kindred to come along with Christiana and with her sons. At that the old honest man said, "Mercy is thy name: by mercy shalt thou be sustained and carried through all those difficulties that shall assault thee in thy way."

XIV

PHŒBE: THE "DEACONESS"

It will be remembered that Paul on his second missionary journey stopped at Corinth for an evangelistic campaign of a year and a half. There were many converts to show for it; among them such notable ones as Aquila and Priscilla, Crispus the ruler of the synagogue and Sosthenes his successor, Justus in whose house Paul preached after being driven out of the synagogue and Gaius "mine host," evidently an influential man.

Just across the narrow isthmus, not ten miles from Corinth, lay the busy seaport town of Cenchrea, where Paul probably preached as in other suburban places. Presently (A.D. 55) a church was organized there, and Phœbe became a member of it.

Five years later Paul was again in Corinth and while there wrote his Epistle to the Romans; an inspired masterpiece of logic which struck the keynote of orthodoxy

for the universal church through all the succeeding ages. It chanced that Phœbe was just then meditating a journey to Rome and the conveying of this Epistle was entrusted to her.

The last chapter of the Epistle is devoted to salutations: it begins thus:

"I commend unto you Phœbe our sister, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also."

By this it would appear, *first,* that Phœbe was a woman of some consequence, since she had planned a long journey on business of her own: *second,* that she was prominent as "a servant" in the affairs of the Cenchrean church. *Third,* that she held an official position of some sort connected with the relief of the poor. The Greek word here rendered "succorer" is *prostatis,* literally, one who stands by in case of need. In classical Greek the word was used of the trainer in the Olympic games, who stood by the athletes to see that they were properly trained and not

overtrained and rightly girded when they lined up for the signal.

In my first parish I had a Board of Deacons who were willing but comparatively inefficient, owing to the fact that their access to the mothers and children who needed assistance was greatly limited in the necessity of the case. We solved the difficulty by appointing two women to supplement their work; with the result not only that the innermost places of needy homes were made accessible, but that the Deacons themselves were greatly helped and encouraged, and that the Diaconate was no longer "a fifth wheel," but a most efficient arm of the church service. That was forty years ago; and the plan continues in that parish to this day.

By this brief reference to Phœbe we are moved to a consideration of the position of women generally in the Christian Church.

It is a singular fact — and unaccountable without a due regard to the divine origin of Christianity — that the only countries where womanhood is duly honored are those embraced within the charmed circle known as

"Christendom," that is, such as are under the luminous shadow of the Cross.

The first of the Messianic prophecies, uttered at the gateway of Paradise immediately after the fall, announced that the coming Christ was to be "the seed of woman"; and in the fulness of time "the Lord of all good Christians was of a woman born." By that supernatural birth all womanhood was honored.

"And Mary said, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour; for he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name!'"

In the ministry of Jesus he constantly and consistently honored the "ministering women" who attended upon him and served him in manifold ways. Compare his attitude with that of Mohammed, whose *Surah* on womanhood in the Koran is entitled, "The Cow," and whose heaven is peopled with harems of houris for men. Or compare it with the treatment of women in India, where a woman's only hope of heaven is in

the remote contingency that some time, in the endless circle of transmigrations, she may chance to be born a man!

The attitude of the apostles in this particular was like that of their Master. Read again the story of John's foster-care of the bereaved mother of Jesus, in John 19: 25–27. Read of the many services rendered by women to Paul in his missionary work and his grateful tributes to them.

At this point it is likely that some one is thinking of what Paul said to the women of Corinth and Ephesus about the shame of worshipping "with their heads unveiled" (1 Cor. 11: 5) and about "keeping silence" in the churches. (1 Cor. 14: 34; 1 Tim. 2: 11, 12.) Let it be remembered, however, that in Ephesus there were thousands of so-called "priestesses" whose persons were consecrated to the licentious worship of the Olympian gods, that thousands of women of like character were devoted to "great Diana of the Ephesians," and that their abominable calling was advertised by their uncovered heads and their vociferous part in the temple rites; and Paul's words will appear

in a more reasonable light. The veil of modesty is the peculiar adornment of a Christian woman.

In the Gospel she has a blessed opportunity of serving in three distinct coigns of vantage.

The *first* is the home. God be praised for the Christian home! What a realm for a queen! "Wife," "mother," "daughter," "sister" — what sacred memories gather around those words in Christian lands! It is so everywhere. An American tourist and his Turkish dragoman were once passing through Cairo when an old woman spoke to the dragoman, who immediately turned and spat in her face. In answer to the American's remonstrance he said, "Pooh, what should I do? She's my mother!" Would that be possible, think you, in any country where the Gospel holds sway?

The *second* of the peculiar spheres of usefulness open to women in Christian lands is Charity. Who shall do justice to their "labor of love and patience of hope"? There was a woman, back in the time of the Crimean war, who used to make her way at

night among the wounded with a lamp in hand, administering "first aid" to suffering bodies and souls. I can remember seeing her picture and under it the familiar name by which the grateful soldiers knew her, "The Lady with the Lamp." How many such ministering women there have been; how many under the blessed shadow of the Red Cross in these last days!

The *third* and most important sphere of woman's work is in the Church: sometimes as deaconesses; more frequently as "prophetesses" or Biblical teachers, like the daughters of Philip (Acts 21: 9). The Sunday Schools of Christendom are (strange word!) manned by women. And what shall be said of their efficiency in the great missionary propaganda at home and abroad? The mothers and daughters in the zenanas of the Orient are accessible to their devoted "succorers"; many have been their conquests for Christ. "Give them of the fruit of their hands, and let their own works praise them in the gates!"

Now, behold, I show unto you a great mystery. In view of all the foregoing how is it

that any thoughtful woman in this land of light can refrain from loving and serving Christ! The most seemly tributes she can pay in return for his benefactions are neither tears of remembrance nor spices for his anointing, but the gold and myrrh and frankincense of grateful love and devotion. So let all the women of Israel, like Mary of Magdala, fall down before him with the cry "*Rabboni!* my Master!"

XV

A BODY GUARD

"This book will make a traveler of thee,
If by its counsel thou wilt ruléd be."

JOHN BUNYAN

XV

A BODY GUARD

PAUL set out on his third missionary journey in the year 53. On reaching Ephesus he found a field ripe for the sickle and remained three years. He then pushed on by easy stages to Corinth, where he spent three fruitful months. He was now forty-seven years of age and physically a worn man. This was perhaps the reason for his assembling a group of trusty friends to accompany him from then on. (Acts 20: 1–4.)

To begin with, there was faithful Timothy, his spiritual son. The next was Sopater, a native of Berea and therefore probably a Biblical expert. Then Secundus of Thessalonica, of whom we know nothing more. The next, Tychicus, was destined to prove himself a faithful companion and efficient servitor in many ways. (Eph. 6: 21; Col. 4: 7; 2 Tim. 4: 12.) Trophimus was soon obliged to drop out of the company, being left behind at Miletus sick. (2 Tim.

4:20.) Old Gaius of Derb had been baptized by Paul (1 Cor. 1:14) and never forgot it. He showed his gratitude not only by entertaining Paul but by suffering with and for him. (Acts 19:29). And finally there was Aristarchus of Thessalonica, a fellow-sufferer (Acts 19:29): who was with Paul on his last eventful voyage (Acts 27:2) and shared the hardships of his weary imprisonment at Rome. (Col. 4:10; Philemon 24.)

I. Observe that these seven were nobodies, that is, their achievements were not in the lime-light. Practically all that we know of them is that they were associated with Paul in missionary work. But that is enough. Their virtues and accomplishments are recorded in heaven. "The Master praises: what are men?"

II. Observe how Paul, in gathering this group of helpers about him, anticipated one of the most important conclusions of our modern Missionary Boards, namely, the Value of the Phalanx.

Time was when men, and occasionally women, went out all alone with their message to the regions beyond; but never now. Ex-

perience has taught the importance of (to use a good old word now obsolete) "opitulation."

Little wonder that Paul's heart sank within him when, standing alone in the market-place of Athens, he beheld on every side the evidences of "a city wholly given to idolatry": little wonder that he longed "for Silas and Timotheus to come to him with all speed." By the time he was ready to pursue his third missionary journey he had come to fully realize the importance of having a competent staff of helpers. They advanced to their work like a Spartan phalanx, shoulder to shoulder, with shields overlapped: and their co-operation yielded a harvest which could never have been gathered from the seed-sowing of a lone man.

A group of young Christians at Oxford got together at the flood-tide of infidelity two hundred years ago for mutual prayer and conference. They were dubbed "The Holy Club"; but in spite of the jeering opposition of their fellow-students they went right on. And how far that little candle threw its beams! At graduation they

parted for their several ways; but the tie that bound George Whitefield and the Wesley brothers and four other members of the Holy Club was never broken. Out of that little group issued radiating lines of sanctified power that eventuated in the organization of the great Methodist Church, whose lines have since gone forth into all the world!

In the middle of the last century a few students in one of our Theological Seminaries, hearing of the desperate need of the Gospel on our Western frontiers, organized what they called "The Dakota Band," pledging themselves to home missions. On graduating they turned their faces toward the destitute fields of the Dakotas, keeping up a round-robin of mutual prayer; and to-day hundreds of cross-tipped spires pay tribute to their joint faithfulness. The Dutch have a true saying, *Een dracht maakt macht:* "in union there is strength."

III. But after all observe how the constraint of duty rests on the lone man. Each for himself must determine how far and how faithfully he will meet the behest of the

Master, "Go, evangelize!" It is the business of all businesses for those who are in covenant with him. Not ministers only, but Christians all and several, are bound to heed it.

"I'm going to China," said a young girl in my congregation fifteen years ago. "But," said I, "wouldn't it be better to wait a while and prepare yourself?" She answered, "I can't wait, because they can't wait. For want of the Gospel they are going out into the dark! I know I'm not educated; but I know what they don't know, that Christ died for them; and I *must* go and tell them about it." I had my doubts then; but I have none now. On my study table is a picture of a woman worker in the China Inland Mission with a group of young converts gathered about her. "The end crowns the work." I know now that Miss Jennie Williams did better to follow the Lord's counsel than mine. His way is always the right way.

In one of my classes at Princeton Seminary was a young man with a consuming zeal for missions. He enlisted to go to India. The day before his graduation he said

to his classmates, "If it be the Lord's will I should like to spend forty years in giving the Gospel to the heathen; and then if he wants me I'll be ready to go." He sailed with his young wife and reached his destination just as a native insurrection broke out. The next day he fled with other missionaries to a near-by cave, where three days afterward they were overtaken by the mob and all cruelly slain. He had asked for forty years of service: only a scant four days were given him! But who shall measure the outcome of those four days? When his story was told in the Seminary a dozen students were ready to take his place. "The worker dies, but the work goes on." Let us rather say that because the work goes on the worker never dies. His influence survives him, like the song of the reaper that Wordsworth heard at evening:

> "I listened till I had my fill;
> And as I struggled up the hill
> The music in my soul I bore
> Long after it was heard no more."

The lesson that we get from the little group of untrumpeted ones who accompa-

nied Paul on his third journey is the blessedness and imperativeness of the Great Commission. It may be that some inconspicuous Sopater or Secundus now reading these lines is asking "What can I do?" If so let him (or her) frame that question a little differently and send it upward instead of inward, as Paul did, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And the answer will surely be forthcoming. The way to the foreign field is not open to all; but no one is exempt from the obligation of missions. A missionary is literally "a sent one." Jesus said to his disciples, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." What for? "To seek and to save." So then as followers of Christ we all belong to the Life-saving Service; and if we have hitherto been indolently content with the assurance of a personal salvation, it behooves us now to get busy for our Lord.

"Hark! the voice of Jesus calling,
'Who will go and work to-day?
Fields are white, and harvest waiting;
Who will bear the sheaves away?'

"If you cannot speak like angels,
If you cannot preach like Paul,

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You can tell the love of Jesus,
You can say, 'He died for all.'

"Take the task He gives you gladly,
Let His work your pleasure be;
Answer quickly when He calleth,
'Here am I! Send me, send me!'"

The veterans of the G. A. R. meet frequently around their camp-fires to exchange reminiscences of the Civil War. At such times I have seen their faces flush and their old eyes kindle as if with a replenishment of youth. Are there such camp-fires in heaven? If so what tales have Paul and his Body Guard to tell — of perils oft by land and sea, of prison-damp and loneliness, of hairbreadth escapes, of victories won, of hoping for the service chevron, of visions of cloudy pillars in the air which were not clouds but fluttering garments of the White Christ leading on! And what greetings must be theirs as they pass along the golden streets: "I from Berea and I from Philippi and I from Troas and I from Ephesus, thank you!" These are stars in their crown of rejoicing. God grant there may be such stars for us!